

Children's books gift guide 2023: A title for every type of young reader

Whether you're shopping for a budding scientist or an aspiring world-changer, The Globe's gift guide has something for every kid on your list

GLOBE STAFF

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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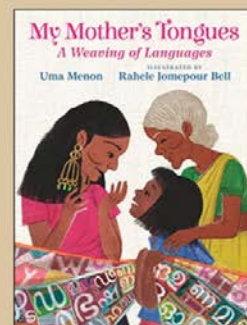
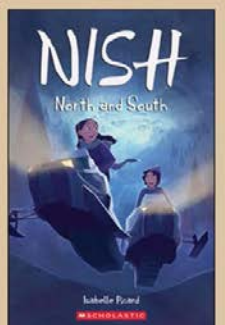
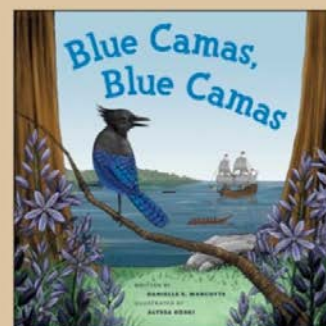
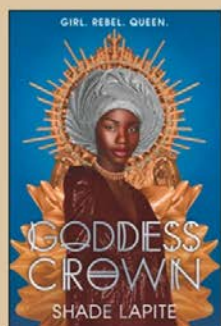


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I'M SHOPPING FOR ...

THE BUDDING NATURALIST AND SCIENTIST

THE SPORTS ENTHUSIAST

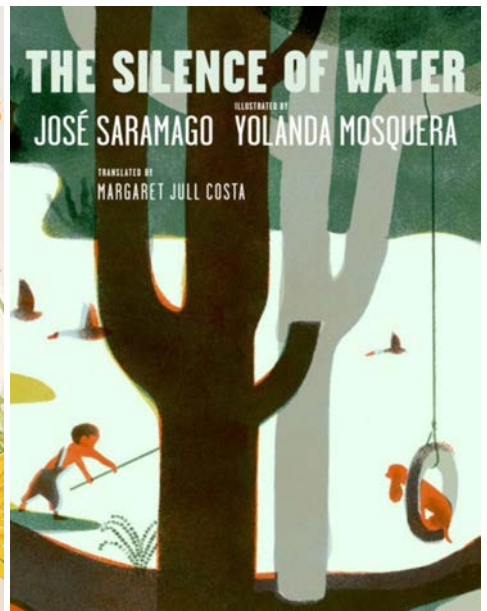
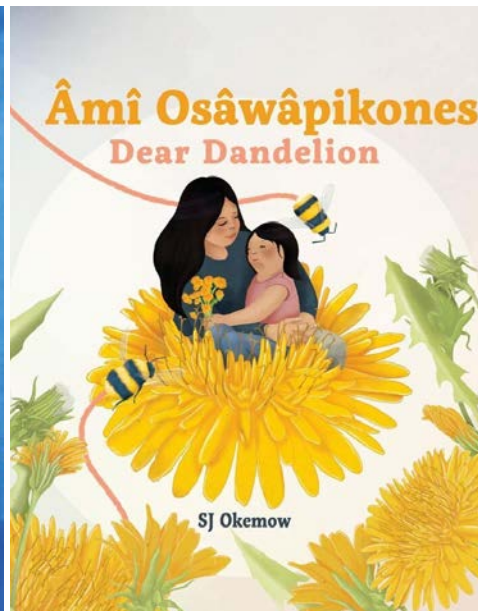
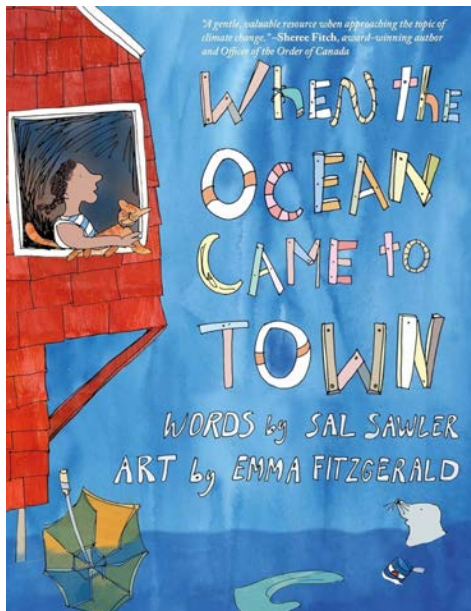
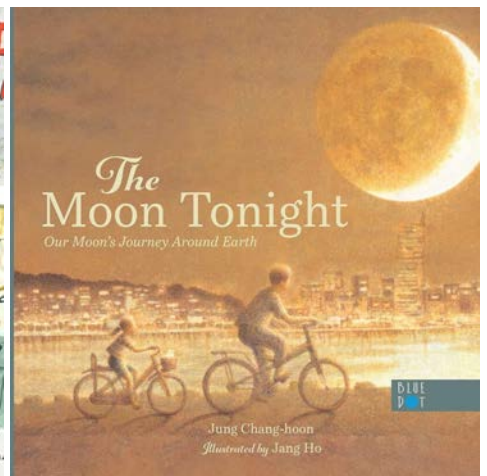
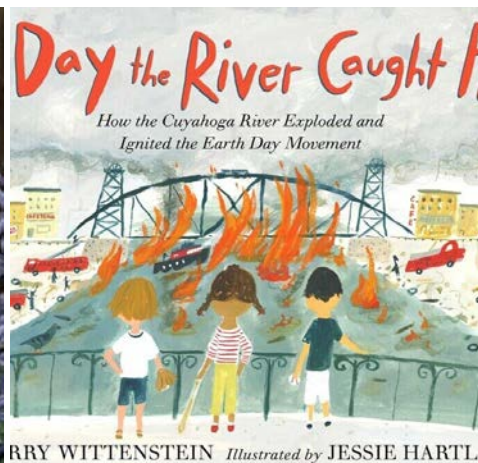
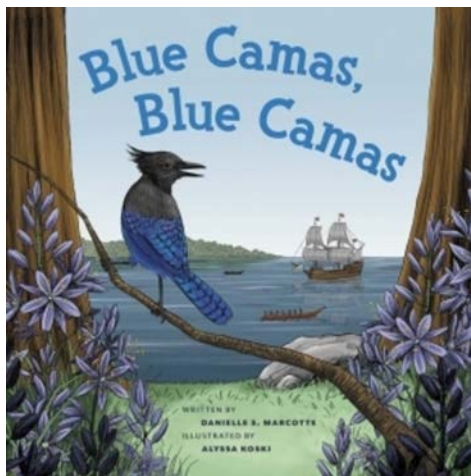
THE PICTURE BOOK LOVER

THE ASPIRING WORLD-CHANGER

The 2023 Holiday Books Gift Guide

Holiday gift guide 2023: Stylish and practical items for everyone in your life

For the Budding Naturalist



Blue Camas, Blue Camas, by Danielle S. Marcotte, illustrated by Alyssa Koski (Heritage House, 4-8) The story of how the blue camas, a flower sacred to the Lekwungen First Nations and other Indigenous peoples on the Northwest Coast was nearly destroyed through miscommunication and colonization. Marcotte ties history to contemporary issues including awareness for food rights, biodiversity and the preservation of ecosystems.

The Day the River Caught Fire, by Barry Wittenstein, illustrated by Jessie Hartland (Simon & Schuster, 6-9) In June, 1969, the Cuyahoga River caught fire (again!) but this time the U.S. media picked up on the story and a year later president Richard Nixon created the Environmental Protection Agency and the first Earth Day was celebrated.

The Moon Tonight, by Jung Chang-hoon, illustrated by Jang Ho (Blue Dot Kids Press, 4-8) Told through the perspective of a father sharing what he knows with his daughter, readers are treated to an exquisite look at the science behind the 29-day lunar cycle and the moon's four phases: crescent, quarter, full and new.

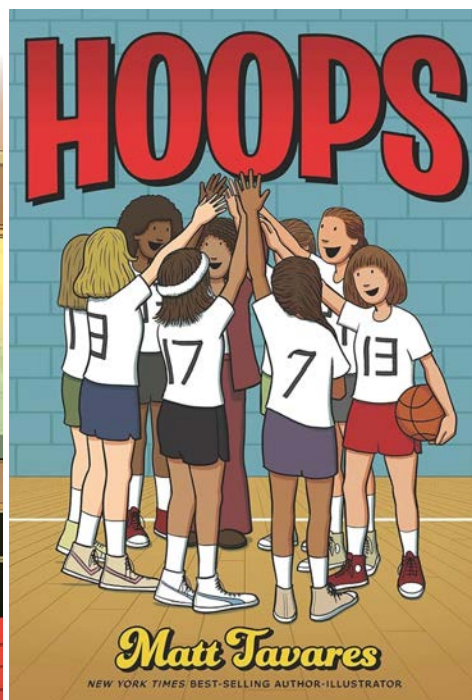
When the Ocean Came to Town, by Sal Sawyer, illustrated by Emma Fitzgerald (Nimbus, 4-8) Gretchen has a passion for the ocean until she's confronted with the knowledge that a great storm could possibly wipe out her community unless everyone works together. This a great book to help start conversations about a substance that covers 71 per cent of the planet.

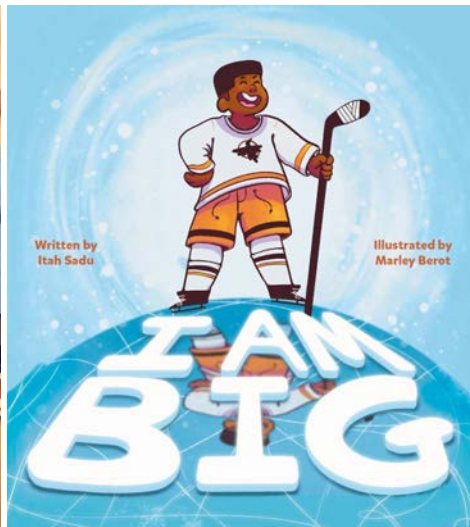
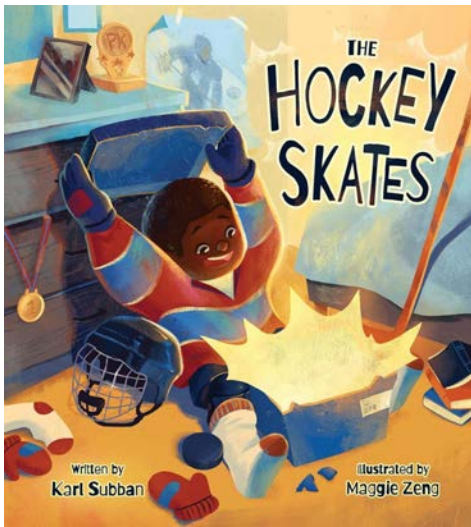
Âmî Osâwâpikones (Dear Dandelion), by SJ Okemow (Annick Press, 4-8) Following the dandelions through the seasons, this is a lyrical tribute about rethinking the dandelions and what they give back to the ecosystem.

The Silence of Water, by José Saramago, illustrated by Yolanda Mosquera (Triangle Square, 5-9) A section of the Nobel Prize winner's memoir, *Small Memories*, is transformed into a picture book about making connections to the natural world. Fishing on the banks of a river near his grandparents' farm, a boy imagines he's about to catch a big fish. But, while he fails to do so, he suddenly is aware of being connected to all things.

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For the Sports Enthusiast





Akim Aliu: Dreamer, Akim Aliu, illustrated by Karen De la Vega (Scholastic, 12+) A powerful and poignant graphic novel that follows an extraordinary hockey player who was born in Nigeria, raised in Ukraine and emigrated to Canada where he fell in love with hockey.

Hoops, Matt Tavares (Candlewick, 8-12) This graphic novel follows the Wilkins Lady Bears, an all-girl's basketball team in the 1970s, who start with nothing because high-school sports has no place for girls. But the Lady Bears change that when they go on to win the Indiana State Championship.

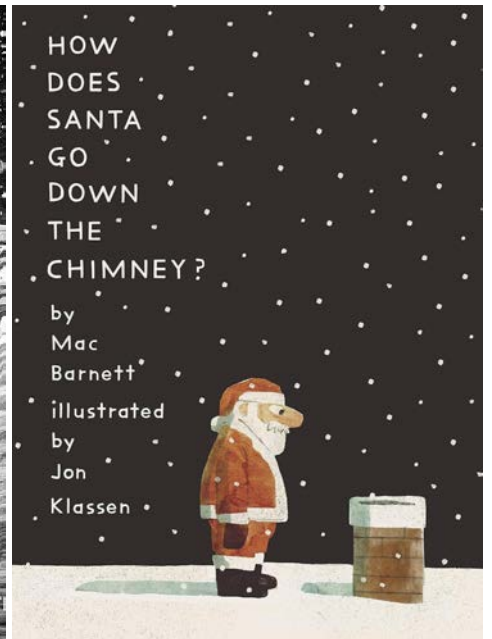
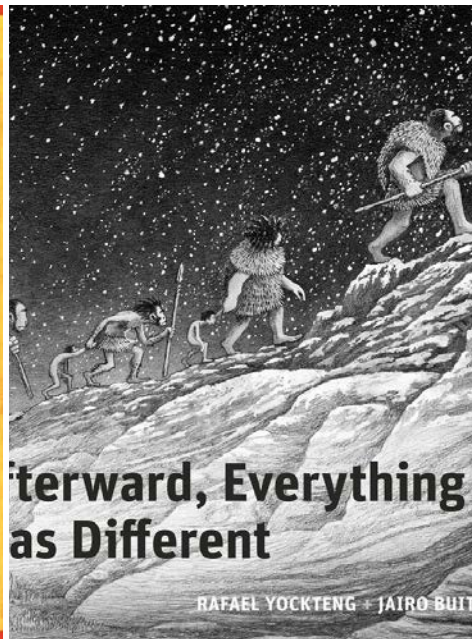
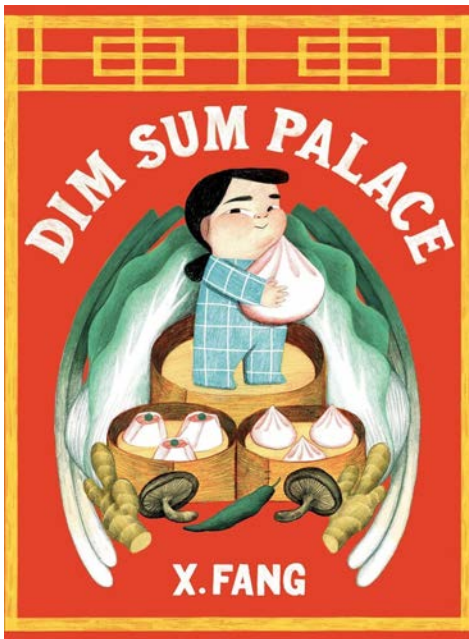
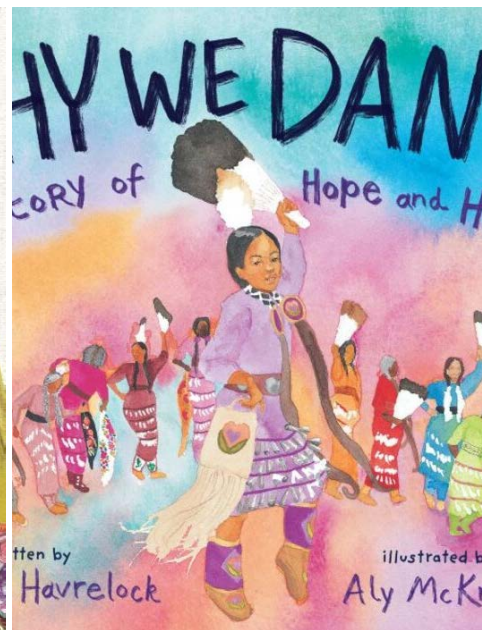
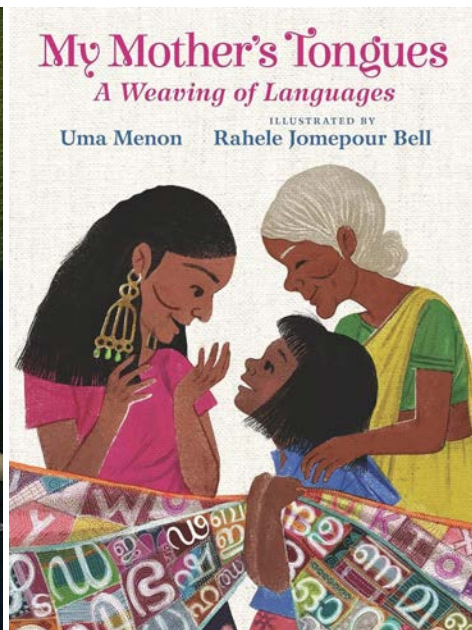
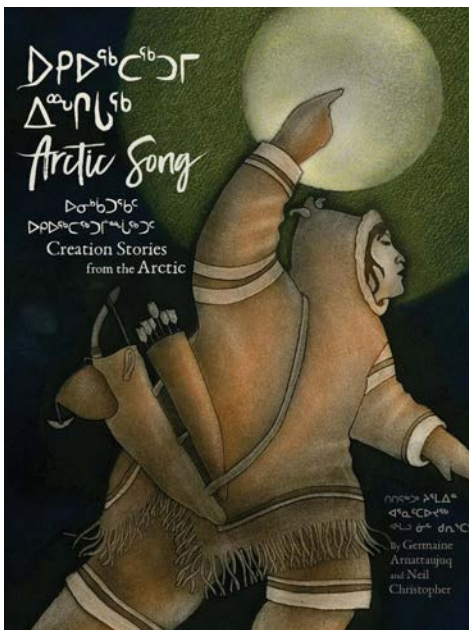
Game Face, Shari Green (Groundwood, 9-12) Thirteen-year-old Jonah has to confront his chronic anxiety, triggered by his mother's death, to succeed as his hockey team's goalie. But realizing that he doesn't have to do this on his own makes it possible for Jonah to make some big changes in his life.

The Hockey Skates, Karl Subban, illustrated by Maggie Zeng (HarperCollins, 4-7) PK waits for a new pair of skates but every delivery has a problem; either they're the wrong size or the wrong colour or the wrong style. They're all wrong and as hockey season looms, PK is convinced he's never going to get the skates he needs. Inspired by P.K. Subban (the NHL star), readers are kept engaged as they wait to find out whether he'll get his skates.

I Am BIG, Itah Sahu, illustrated by Marley Berot (Second Story Press, 6-8) A powerful book about a young Black hockey player who needs to find the confidence to feel BIG on the ice when he faces systemic racism so that he can find the thrill in playing the game.

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For the Picture-Book Lover



Arctic Song, by Germaine Arnattuquq (Arnaktauyok) with Neil Christopher (Inhabit Media, 8+) This book combines simple retellings of traditional Inuit stories with the exquisite artwork of acclaimed artist Germaine Arnattuquq (also includes a foreword by the artist about her work illustrating Inuit myths and legends).

My Mother's Tongues, by Uma Menon, illustrated by Rahele Jomepour Bell (Candlewick, 4-8) Written by Menon when she was just 16, the book follows Sumi's mother who speaks Malayalam and English, switching between them effortlessly and sometimes involving a combination of both. This is a powerful ode to the power of linguistic diversity.

Why We Dance, by Deidre Havrelock, illustrated by Aly McKnight (Abrams, 4-8) A young girl is nervous about getting ready to participate in her first jingle dance but her fears start to evaporate as she concentrates on the lyrical repetitions and rhythmic beat of the dance. Included is a fascinating history of jingle dancing's connection to the 1919 flu pandemic.

Dim Sum Palace, by X. Fang (Tundra Books, 3-7) An homage to Maurice Sendak's *In the Night Kitchen*, this whimsical tale follows Liddy who is so excited about visiting the Dim Sum Palace restaurant that she dreams of following the smells of the things she most loves right into the restaurant's kitchen. She even dreams that she's made into a dumpling and served up to the Empress.

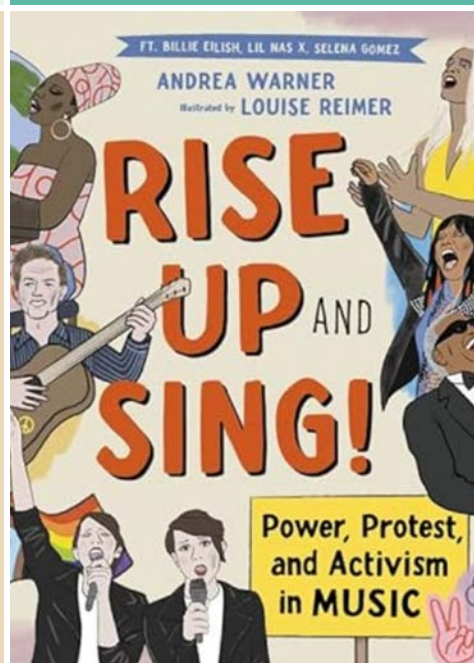
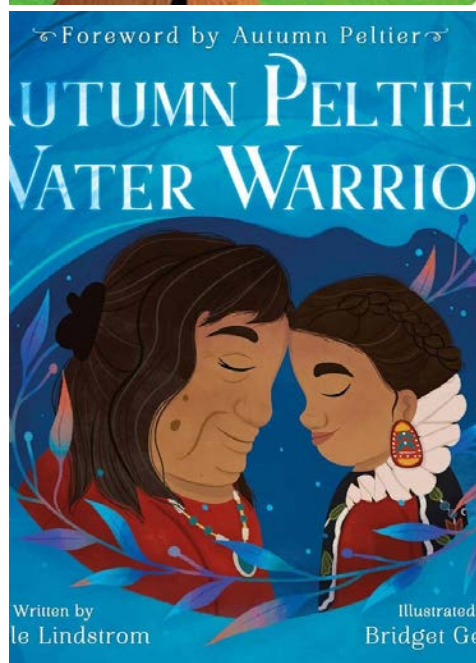
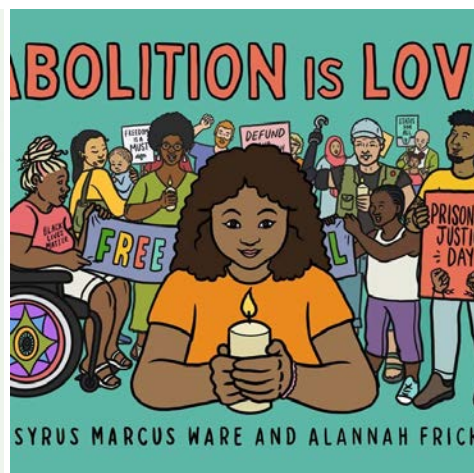
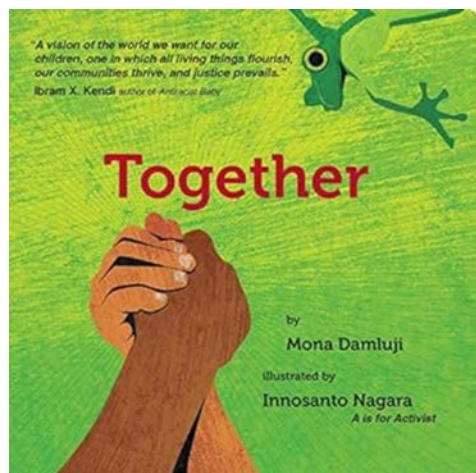
Afterward, Everything Was Different, by Jairo Buitrago, illustrated by Rafael Yockteng (Greystone Kids, 6+) Readers are taken into the lives of a Pleistocene-era family and the trials they face trying to survive. Yockteng's thrilling graphite and ink

illustrations suggest how an exceptionally observant a young girl might have been in order to capture their struggles on the walls of a cave 40,000 years ago.

How Does Santa Go Down the Chimney?, by Mac Barnett, illustrated by Jon Klassen (Candlewick, 4-8) While Barnett imagines some of the possible ways that Santa might consider getting into people's houses, you'll have to share this book with a young reader to see if he discovers Santa's secret. Klassen's deadpan illustrations are perfect.

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For the Aspiring World-Changer



Together, Mona Damluji, illustrated by Innosanto Nagara (Triangle Square, 4-8) A powerful meditation on the power of people acting together to produce a world in which all living things flourish, communities thrive and justice prevails.

Imagine a Garden, Rina Singh, illustrated by Hoda Hadadi (Greystone Kids, 6-10) Short lyrical poems and breathtaking paper-cut illustrations tell seven real-life stories of ordinary people who become agents of change. By taking action, each one makes an extraordinary difference in their communities in spite of war, poverty and violence.

Abolition is Love, Syrus Marcus Ware, illustrated by Alannah Fricker (Triangle Square, 4-8) Readers watch as Amelie learns about collective care, mutual aid and abolitionist ideas as they help their parents get ready for the annual Prisoners' Justice Day.

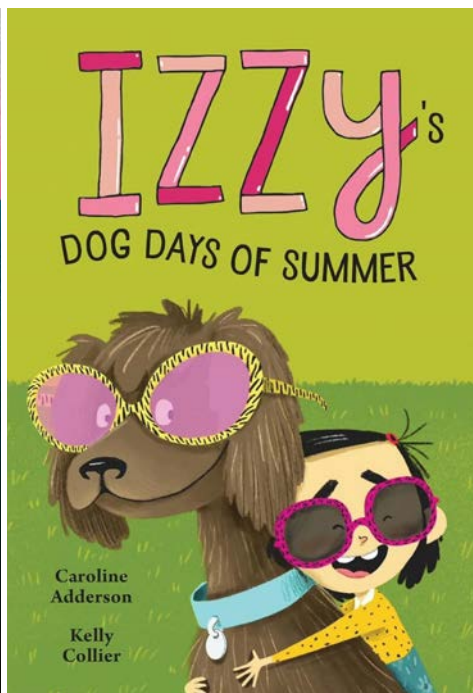
Autumn Peltier, Water Warrior by Carole Lindstrom, illustrated by Bridget George (Roaring Brook Press, 4-8) Celebrating the activism of both Autumn Peltier and her great-aunt Josepine Mandamin, the book traces Peltier confronting Justin Trudeau at 12, speaking at the United Nations at 14 and taking on the mantle of Chief Water Protector for the Anishinabek Nation at 15.

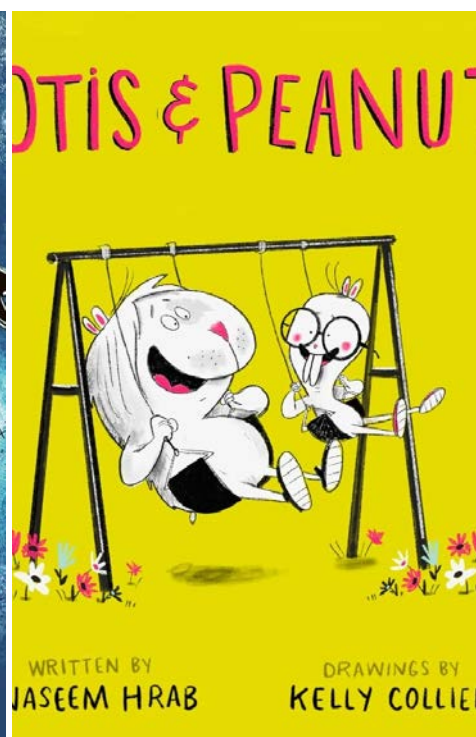
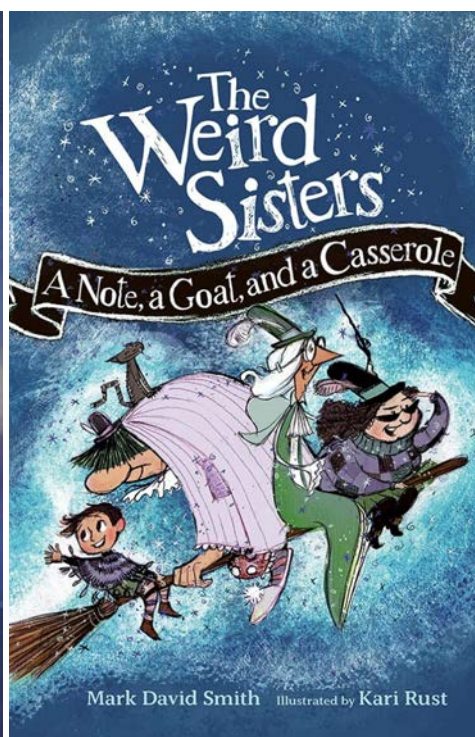
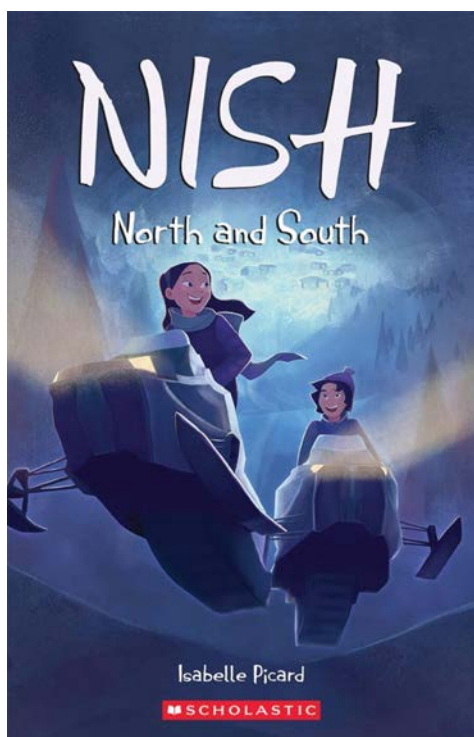
Alone, Paul Tom, illustrated by Mélanie Baillairgé (Groundwood, 8-12) Originally published in French, Tom's work just won the 2023 Prix TD de littérature canadienne pour l'enfance et la jeunesse. It's an exceptional introduction to understanding the plight of young refugees as it focuses on the stories of Afshin, Alain and Patricia and the struggles they faced as unaccompanied minors.

Rise Up and Sing!, Andrea Warner, illustrated by Louise Reimer (Greystone Kids, 10 +) A stunning exploration of the relationship between music and social justice. Warner looks at eight different areas of activism and artists past and present are introduced as well as excellent playlists for each chapter.

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For the Series Lover





The Wild Robot Protects, by Peter Brown (Little, Brown, 8-12) In the third and final book in Brown's Wild Robot series, Roz is faced with the greatest challenge of her robot life – a toxic tide is moving through the ocean and threatening creatures everywhere.

Izzy's Dog Days of Summer, by Caroline Adderson, illustrated by Kelly Collier (Kids Can Press, 6-9) Follow the ever-imaginative Izzy, her best pal Zoë and her mischievous mutt, Rollo, on another hilarious adventure as the trio set up their own summer camp in Izzy's backyard with rib-tickling consequences.

Maggie Lou, Firefox, by Arnolda Dufour Bowes, illustrated by Karlene Harvey (Groundwood, 9-12) There's a reason she's called Firefox and it's because Maggie Lou is always looking for a new challenge. She's impulsive, inventive and full of irrepressible energy and with the help of her big beautiful Métis clan, she's absolutely unstoppable.

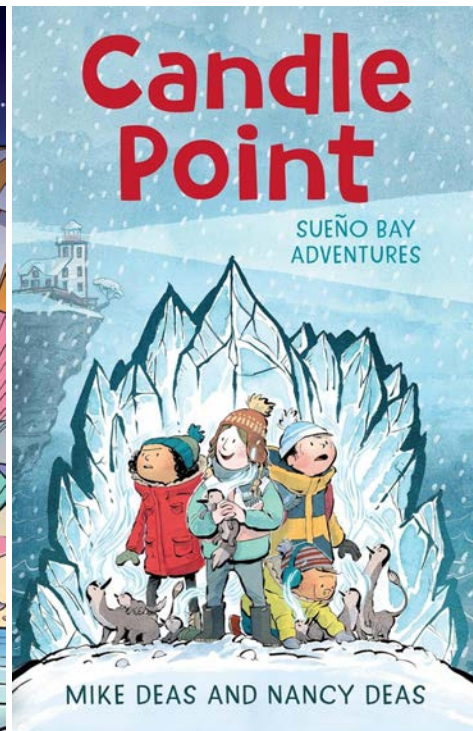
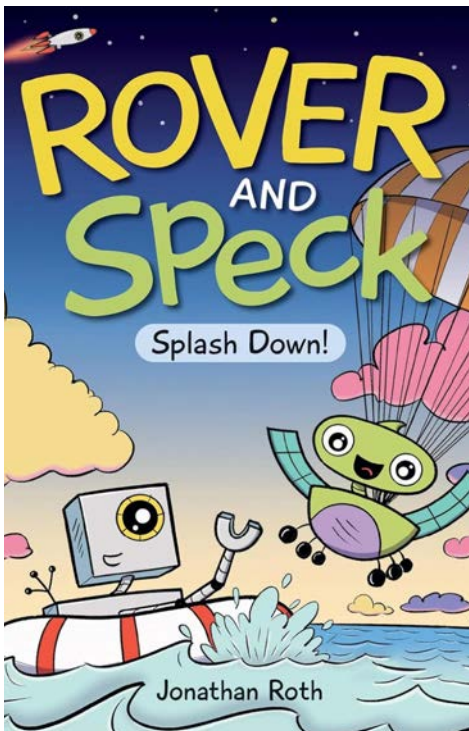
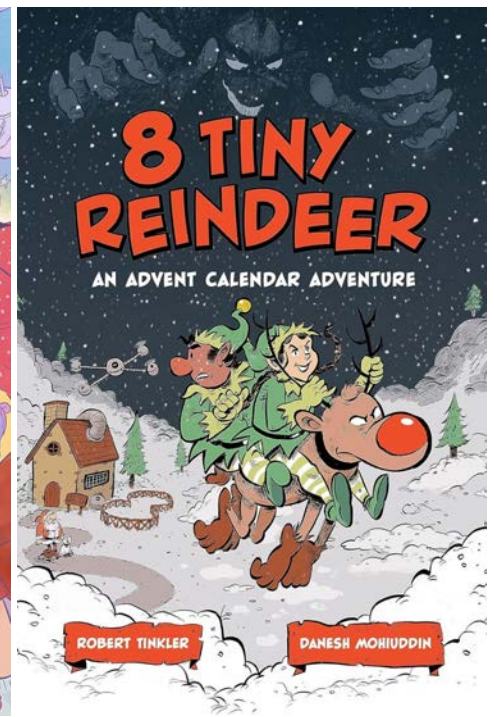
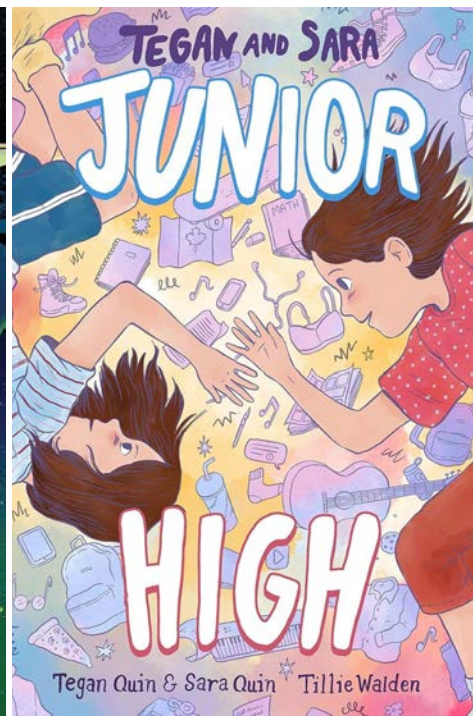
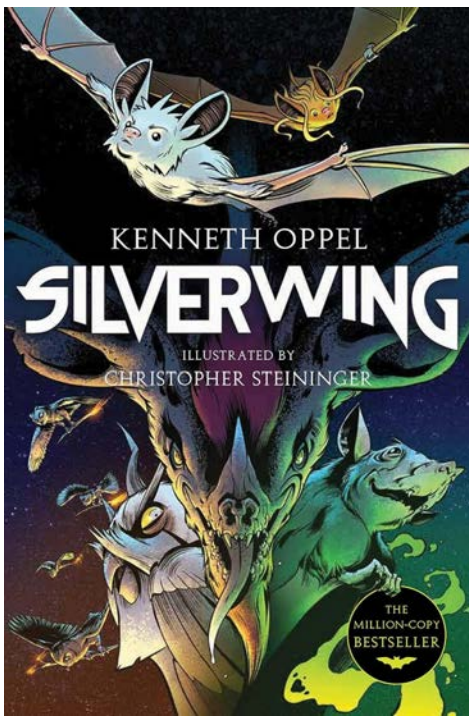
Nish: North and South, by Isabelle Picard (Scholastic Canada, 10-14) The first book in a new series that looks at Innu life through the eyes of 13-year old twins Léon and Éloïse growing up in Matimekush in Northern Quebec. Hockey and history have to take a backseat when their father becomes ill and can't be treated locally and someone from the village disappears. Picard beautifully balances cultural heritage and identity with the daily lives of the twins.

Weird Sisters Detective Agency, by Mark David Smith, illustrated by Kari Rust (OwlKids, 6-9) There are new mysteries for the intrepid Weird Sisters to solve and, as usual, they need to turn to their nine-year-old friend Jessica to help them navigate the always confusing world of Covenly where their witchy ways aren't always appreciated. Readers will especially appreciate the wonderfully wacky wordplay.

Otis and Peanut, by Naseem Hrab, illustrated by Kelly Collier (OwlKids, 6-8) Following in the footsteps of Arnold Lobel's *Frog and Toad* is this delightful pairing of Otis, a long-haired guinea pig, and his pal Peanut, a naked mole rat. In each of the stories that make up this collection, Hrab and Collier explore the connections between this unlikely pair.

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For the Graphic-Novel Fan



Silverwing: The Graphic Novel, by Kenneth Oppel, illustrated by Christopher Steininger (HarperCollins, 8-12) A visually stunning adaptation of Oppel's classic that follows Shade, the runt of his colony, on an epic journey to Hibernaculum, thousands of wingbeats away.

Tegan and Sara: Junior High, by Tegan and Sara Quin, illustrated by Tillie Walden (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 10-14) Based on the childhood memories of these musical powerhouses, this novel explores both the tight bonds that connected the sisters but also how adolescence challenged them and their LGBTQ identities.

8 Tiny Reindeer, by Robert Tinkler, illustrated by Danesh Mohiuddin (Kids Can Press, 7-10) Based on Tinkler's podcast, this is a delightfully goofy twist to stories about Santa and his North Pole workshop.

Rover and Speck: Splash Down, by Jonathan Roth (Kids Can Press, 7-10) The second book in Roth's delightful series that mixes up space-based science with the unlikely friendship of two very different space rovers. Their latest adventure takes them on

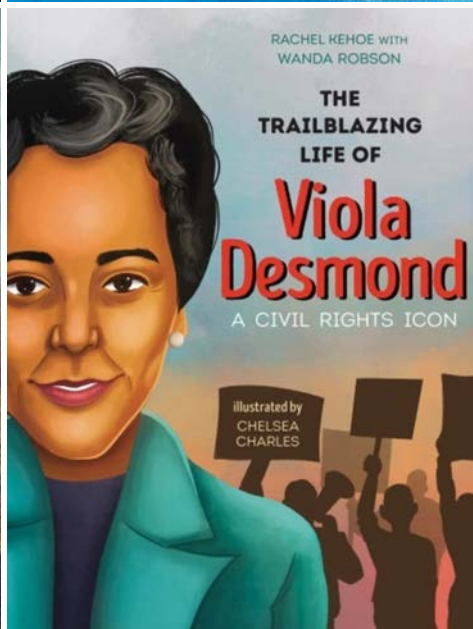
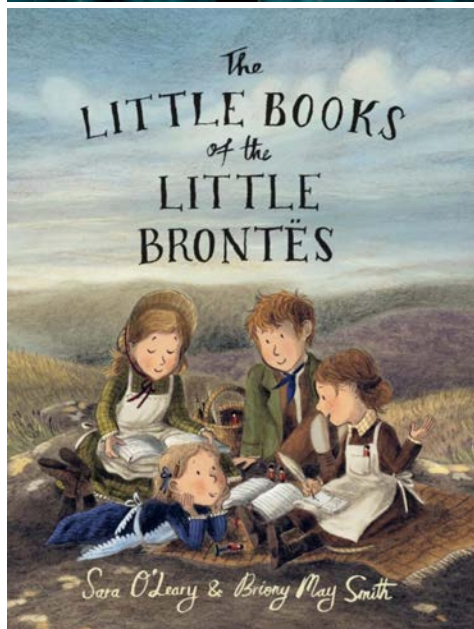
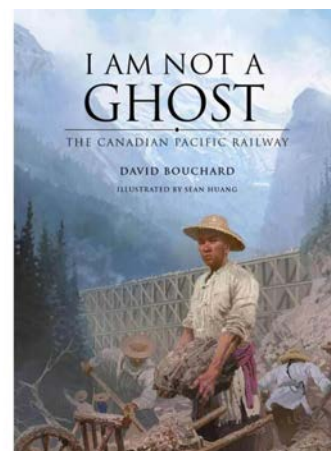
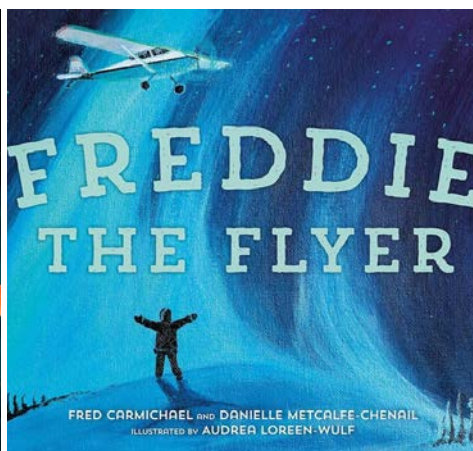
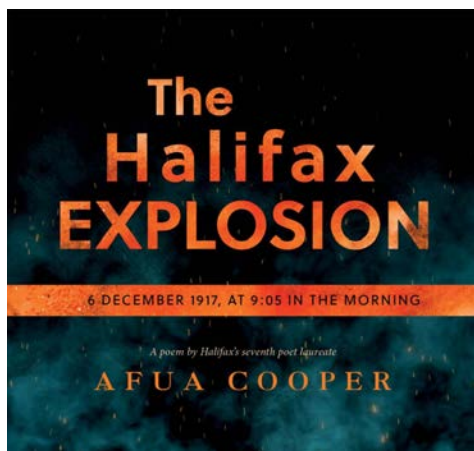
a rescue mission to an unexplored planet where they quite literally have to go into the belly of a hungry space beast.

Candle Point: A Sueño Point Adventure, by Mike and Nancy Deas (Orca, 6-8) The latest book in a series that combines fantasy, adventure and friendship with a dash of environmentalism that is sure to delight graphic-novel beginners. When a mysterious moon crystal threatens the Candle Point lighthouse, it's up to Kay, Ollie, Jenna and Sleeves to save the day.

Four Eyes, by Rex Ogle, illustrated by Dave Valeza (Graphix, 8-12) Rex thought that getting glasses would make it easier to navigate Grade 7 but he wasn't prepared for the challenges of puberty, growing up in a low-income household and bullying.

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For the History Buff



The Halifax Explosion: 6 December 1917 at 9:05 in the Morning, by Afua Cooper, illustrated by Rebecca Bender (Plumleaf Press, 9-12) Using poetry, historical documents and period photographs, Cooper details the events of one of the most devastating moments in Canadian history from the perspective of some of the Black Nova Scotians whose worlds were turned upside down that December morning.

Freddie the Flyer, by Fred Carmichael and Danielle Metcalfe-Chenail, illustrated by Audrea Loreen-Wulf (Tundra Books, 4-8) Celebrating the life of the first Indigenous pilot in the Arctic, this book looks at his life from his childhood in Aklavik

to a career that's spanned 70 years.

I Am Not a Ghost: The Canadian Pacific Railway, by David Bouchard with Zhong-Yang Huang, illustrated by Sean Huang (Plumleaf Press, 8-12) This tells the story of one of the 17,000 Chinese workers who put their lives in danger in building the railroad in the 1880s and the racism and poverty they were forced to suffer. It's also a story of the kindness and empathy of Amelia Douglas, wife of the former governor of B.C.

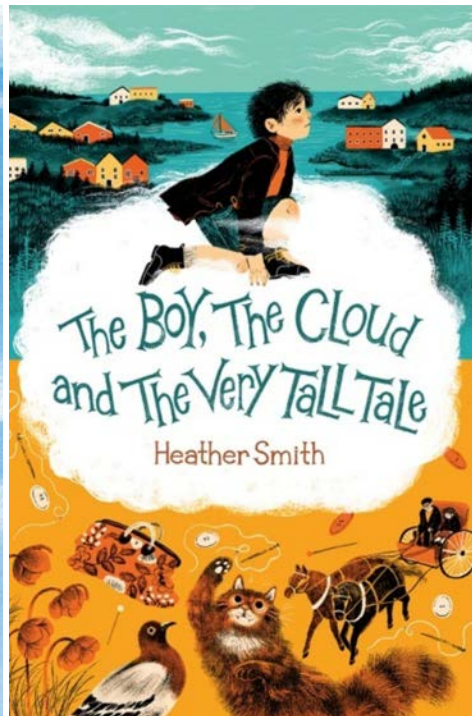
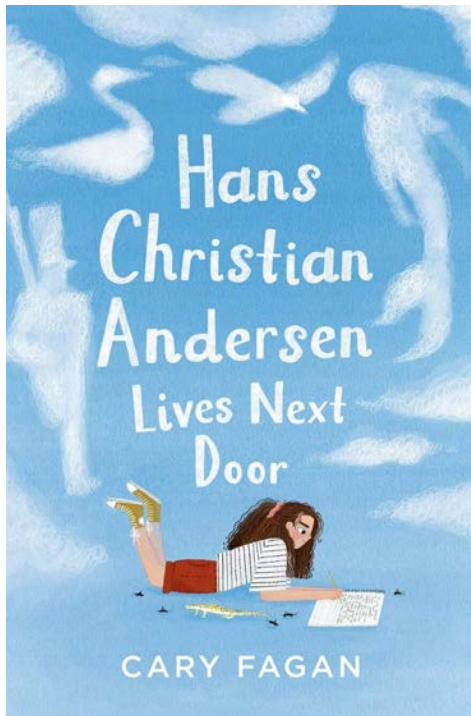
The Little Books of the Little Brontës, by Sara O'Leary, illustrated by Briony May Smith (Tundra Books, 5-9) A delightful portrait of the imaginary world that the four Brontë children – Charlotte, Branwell, Emily and Anne – created for one another in a series of miniature books that offers a glimpse of the what was to come.

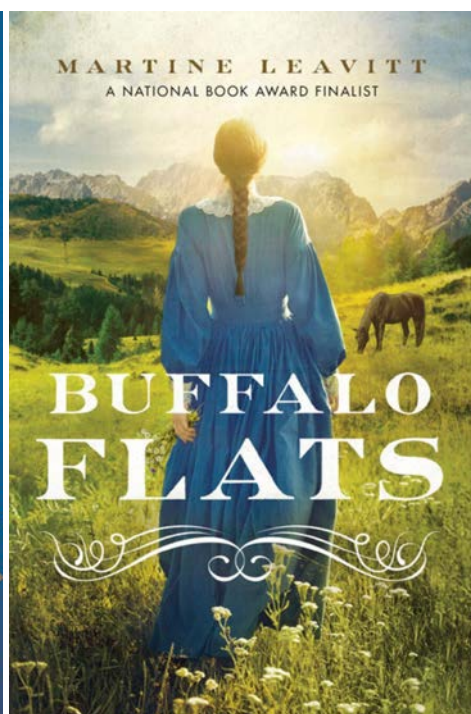
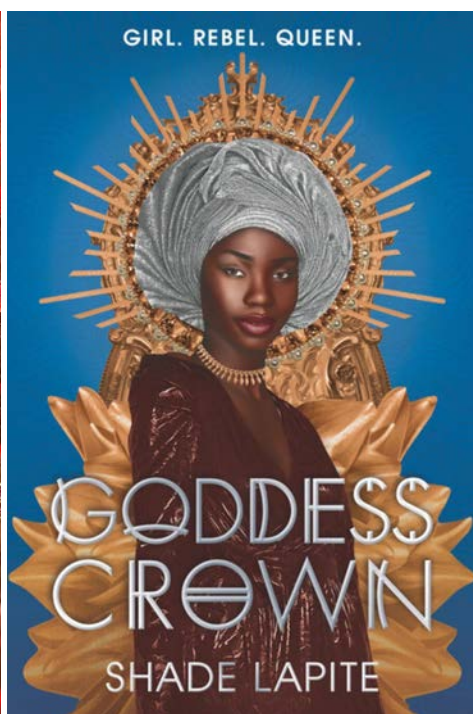
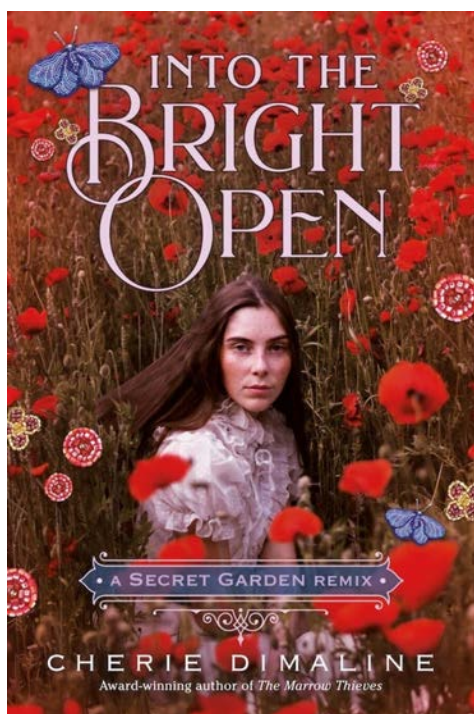
The Trailblazing Life of Viola Desmond, by Rachel Kehoe with Wanda Robson, illustrated by Chelsea Charles (Orca, 9-12) Before Rosa Parks, there was Viola Desmond who in 1946 took a stand against racism in New Glasgow, N.S.

Christo and Jean-Claude Wrap the World, by G. Neri, illustrated by Elizabeth Haidle (Candlewick, 6-10) A fascinating look at the lifelong collaboration between this dynamic duo who changed the way we look at art.

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For the Adventure-Seeker





Hans Christian Andersen Lives Next Door, by Cary Fagan, illustrated by Chelsea O'Byrne (Tundra Books, 9-12) Readers get a glimpse into the imaginative world that Andie Gladman has created for herself, in part to escape being bullied at school. But things takes an interesting turn when Andie convinces herself that her new next-door neighbour is Hans Christian Andersen.

The Boy, the Cloud and the Very Tall Tale, by Heather Smith (Orca, 9-12) Set in Newfoundland in the 1920s, Ewan sets out to find out what happened to his father who, two years earlier, had mysteriously disappeared. A whimsical and rollicking adventure is mixed with a poignant exploration of grief.

Pine Island Visitors, by Polly Horvath (Tundra Books, 9-12) In this madcap sequel to *Pine Island Home*, we return to the madcap lives of the four Macready orphans. This time, the girls find themselves having to cater to the whims of their former caregiver and her exasperating companion who have come on an extended vacation. But, as you'd expect from a Horvath novel, the Macready girls are certainly not going to give up without a fight.

Into the Bright Open: A Secret Garden Remix, by Cherie Dimaline (Feiwel & Friends, 13+) A provocative and powerful reimagining of Frances Hodgson Burnett's classic set not on the English moors but in Georgian Bay. Dimaline pays homage to the original but her 15-year-old Mary Lennox is ready to confront a world where she's faced with racism, colonization, ableism and homophobia.

Goddess Crown, by Shade Lapite (Walker Books, 13+) An exciting debut novel that mixes Afro-fantasy with power politics as Lapite takes us into the world of Kalothia, who has been raised in secret in the lush forests of Galla but now, at 16, has to flee the idyllic world of her childhood to the King's court where poison, plots and patriarchy challenge her in ways she'd never imagined.

Buffalo Flats, by Martine Leavitt (Groundwood, 13+) Readers are whisked into the tempestuous lives of the women and men who settled in the Prairies in the 1800s, in what we now call Southern Alberta. It's a richly lyrical novel that is at once a love letter to the beauty of the land but also to the hard work and challenges homesteaders faced and the faith that sustains 17-year-old Rebecca Leavitt, whose life is very loosely based on the author's great-grandparents.

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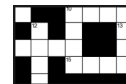
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