

## Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature

### BEST MULTICULTURAL CHILDREN'S BOOKS OF 2021

Curated by Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada, Dr. Sujin Huggins, Dr. Naomi Caldwell,  
and Patricia Miranda

**AMIRA'S PICTURE DAY**, by Reem Faruqi, illustrated by Fahmida Azim, unpagged, published by Holiday House, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-8234-4019-1 (Kindergarten, Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**ANITA AND THE DRAGONS**, by Hannah Carmona, illustrated by Anna Cunha, unpagged, published by Lantana Publishing Ltd-UK, Distributed in US by Lerner Publishing Group Inc., ©2021, ISBN 978-1-911373-63-6 (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**BAREFOOT DREAMS OF PETRA LUNA**, by Alda P. Dobbs, 273 pages, published by Sourcebooks Young Readers, an imprint of Sourcebooks Kids, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-72823-465-6 (Intermediate/Middle School, fiction)

**BEASTS OF PREY**, by Ayana Gray, 497 pages, published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-593-40568-0 (Middle School/High school, fantasy)

**BEING CLEM**, by Lesa Cline-Ransome, 256 pages, published by Holiday House, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-8234-4604-9 (Upper elementary/Middle School, fiction)

**BLACK BOY JOY**, edited by Kwame Mbalia, 296 pages, published by Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-593-37993-6 (Upper elementary/Middle school, anthology, [multiple genres])

**BOOGIE BOOGIE Y'ALL**, written and illustrated by C.G. Esperanza aka Chala Ranza, unpagged, published by Katherine Tegen Books, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-06-297622-2 (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**BORN BEHIND BARS**, by Padma Venkatraman, 272 pages, published by Nancy Paulsen Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-593-11247-2 (Upper elementary/Middle school, fiction)



**BORN ON WATER: THE 1619 PROJECT**, by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renee Watson, illustrated by Nikkolas Smith, unpagged, published by Kokila, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-593-30735-9 (Elementary school, nonfiction, fiction, picture book)

**BRIGHT STAR**, written and illustrated by Yuyi Morales, unpagged, published by Neal Porter Books, an imprint of Holiday House Publishing, Inc., ©2021, ISBN 978-0-8234-4328-4 (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**CHANGE SINGS: A CHILDREN'S ANTHEM**, by Amanda Gorman, illustrated by Loren Long, unpagged, published by Viking, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-593-20322-4 (Elementary school, poetry, picture book)

**CHILD OF THE FLOWER-SONG PEOPLE: LUZ JEMÉNEZ, DAUGHTER OF THE NAHUA**, by Gloria Amescua, illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh, unpagged, published by Abrams Books for Young Readers., ©2021, ISBN 978-1-4197-4020-6, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**COT IN THE ROOM, THE**, by Hilda Eunice Burgos, illustrated by Gaby D'Alessandro, unpagged, published by Kokila, an imprint of Penguin Random House, LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-593-11047-8, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**COQUÍ IN THE CITY**, written and illustrated by Nomar Perez, unpagged, published by Dial Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Penguin Random House, LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-593-10903-8, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**DELICIOUS!: POEMS CELEBRATING STREET FOOD AROUND THE WORLD**, by Julie Hofstand Larios, illustrated by Julie Paschkis, unpagged, published by Beach Lane Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division, Simon & Schuster Inc., ©2021, ISBN 978-1-5344-5377-7, (Elementary school, poetry, picture book)

**DREAM STREET**, by Tricia Elam Walker, illustrated by Ekua Holmes, unpagged, published by Anne Schwartz Books, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Penguin Random House, LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-525-58110-9, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**FEARLESS FLIGHTS OF HAZEL YING LEE, THE**, by Julie Leung, illustrated by Julie Kwon, unpagged, published by Little Brown and Company, a division of Hachette Books Group Inc., ©2021, ISBN 978-0-7595-5495-5, (Elementary school, nonfiction/biography, picture book)



**FROM THE TOPS OF THE TREES**, by Kao Kalia Yang, illustrated by Rachel Wada, unpagged, published by Carolrhoda Books, an imprint of Lerner Publishing Group, Inc, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-5415-8130-2, (Elementary school, nonfiction/autobiography, picture book)

**GRANDPA ACROSS THE OCEAN**, written and illustrated by Hyewon Yum, unpagged, published by Abrams Books for Young Readers, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-41974-225-5, (Kindergarten, Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**HANNAH AND THE RAMADAN GIFT**, by Qasim Rashid, Illustrated by Aaliya Jaleel, unpagged, published by Viking, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-593-114667, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**HEALER OF THE WATER MONSTER**, by Brian Young, 362 pages, published by Heartburn, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-06-299040-2, (Upper elementary school/Middle school, nonfiction, mythology)

**HUNDRED THOUSAND WELCOMES, A**, by Mary Lee Donovan, illustrated by Lian Cho, unpagged, published by Greenwillow Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-06-287772-7, (Elementary school, nonfiction, picture book)

**HIGHEST TRIBUTE, THE: THURGOOD MARSHALL'S LIFE, LEADERSHIP, AND LEGACY**, by Kekla Magoon, illustrated by Laura Freeman, unpagged, published by Quill Tree Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-06-291251-0, (Elementary school, nonfiction/biography, picture book)

**I CAN HELP**, by Reem Faruqi, illustrated by Mikela Prevost, unpagged, published by Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-8028-5504-6 (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**I DREAM OF POPO**, by Livia Blackburne, illustrated by Julia Kuo, unpagged, published by Roaring Brook Press, a division of Holtzbrinck Publishing Holdings Limited Partnership, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-250-24931-9 (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**I LOVE YOU, BABY BURRITO**, written and illustrated by Angela Dominguez, unpagged, published by Roaring Brook Press, an imprint of a division of Holtzbrinck Publishing Holdings Limited Partnership, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-250-23109-3 (Pre-school/Kindergarten, fiction, picture book)

**I SANG YOU DOWN FROM THE STARS**, by Tasha Spillett-Sumner, illustrated by Michaela Goade, unpagged, published by Little Brown and Company, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-316-49316-1 (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)



**IN THE SPIRIT OF A DREAM: 13 STORIES OF AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS OF COLOR**, developed by Alina Chau, written by Aida Salazar, illustrated by Alina Chau, Bianca Diaz, Dion Mbd, Fahmida Azim, Gaby D'Alessandro, Jose Ramirez, Ken Daley, Nicole Xu, Paulo D. Campos, Rahele Jomepour Bell, Tracy Guiteau, Vanesa Flores, Yas Imamura, unpagged, published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-338-55287-4 (Elementary school, nonfiction, picture book)

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR DANCING**, by Nicola Yoon, 304 pages, published by Random House Children's Books, an imprint of Delacorte Press, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-5247-1896-1, (Middle school/High school, fiction)

**KING OF RAGTIME: THE STORY OF SCOTT JOPLIN**, written and illustrated by Stephen Costanza, unpagged, published by Antheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, Inc., ©2021, ISBN 978-1-5344-103607, (Elementary school, nonfiction/biography, picture book)

**LIFE I'M IN, THE**, by Sharon Flake, 321 pages, published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-338-57317-6, (Middle school/High school, fiction)

**LOTERÍA**, by Karla Arenas Valenti, illustrated by Dana Sanmar, 310 pages, published by Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-593-17696-2, (Upper elementary/Middle school, fiction)

**MANY MEANINGS OF MEILAN, THE**, by Andrea Wang, 364 pages, published by Koila, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-5931-1128-4, (Upper elementary school/Middle school, fiction)

**MAY YOUR LIFE BE DELICIOSA**, by Michael Genhart, illustrated by Loris Lora, unpagged, published by Cameron Kids, a division of ABRAMS, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-951836-22-1, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**MILO IMAGINES THE WORLD**, by Matt de la Peña, illustrated by Christian Robinson, unpagged, published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-399-54908-3, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**MY DAY WITH THE PANYE**, by Tami Charles, illustrated by Sara Palacios, unpagged, published by Candlewick Press, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-7636-9749-5, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**MY TWO BORDER TOWNS**, by David Bowles, illustrated by Erika Meza, unpagged, published by Kokila, an imprint of Penguin Random House, LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-5931-1104-8, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)



**NICKY & VERA: A QUIET HERO OF THE HOLOCAUST AND THE CHILDREN HE RESCUED**, written, and illustrated by Peter Sis, unpagged, published by Norton Young Readers, an imprint of W.W. Norton & Company, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-324-01574-1, (Upper elementary school, nonfiction, picture book)

**NINA: A STORY OF NINA SIMONE**, by Traci N. Todd, illustrated by Christian Robinson, unpagged, published by G.P Putnam's Sons., ©2021, ISBN 978-1-52473-728-3, (Elementary school, nonfiction/biography, picture book)

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**PASSOVER GUEST, THE**, by Susan Kusel, illustrated by Sean Rubin, unpagged, published by Neal Porter Books, an imprint of of Holiday House Publishing Inc., ©2021, ISBN 978-0-8234-4562-2, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**PEOPLE REMEMBER, THE**, by Ibi Zoboi, illustrated by Loveis Wise, unpagged, published by Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers., ©2021, ISBN 978-0-06-291564-1, (Elementary school, fiction, poetry, picture book)

**PLAN FOR THE PEOPLE, A: NELSON MANDELA'S HOPE FOR HIS NATION**, by Lindsey McDivitt, illustrated by Charly Palmer, unpagged, published by Eerdmans Books, an imprint of Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-8028-5502-2 (Elementary school, nonfiction/biography, picture book)

**PLAYING THE CARDS YOU'RE DEALT**, by Varian Johnson, 320 pages, published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., ©2021, ISBN 978-1-338-34853-8 (Upper elementary/Middle school, fiction)

**RECOGNIZE!: AN ANTHOLOGY HONORING AND AMPLIFYING BLACK LIFE**, edited by Wade and Cheryl Hudson, 186 pages, published by Crown Books for Young Readers, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-593-38159-5, (Upper elementary/Middle school, nonfiction, anthology, [multiple genres])

**REVOLUTION IN OUR TIME: THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY'S PROMISE TO THE PEOPLE**, by Kekla Magoon, 400 pages, published by Candlewick, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-5362-1418-5, (Middle school/High school, nonfiction)

**ROOM TO DREAM: A FRONT DESK NOVEL**, by Kelly Yang, 305 pages, published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., ©2021, ISBN 978-1-338-62112-9, (Upper elementary school/Middle school, fiction)



**ROOT MAGIC**, by Eden Royce, 336 pages, published by Walden Pond Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-06-289957-6, (Upper elementary/Middle school, fiction)

**RUBY'S REUNION DAY DINNER**, by Angela Dalton, illustrated by Jestenia Southerland, unpagged, published by Harper, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-06-301574-6, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**RUN**, by John Lewis, and Anthony Aydin, illustrated by Nate Powell and L. Fury, 152 pages, published by Abram Comic Arts, an imprint of Harry N Abrams Inc., ©2021, ISBN 978-1-4197-5961-1, (Elementary school/Middle school, nonfiction/biography, graphic novel)

**SAMIRA SURFS**, by Rukhsanna Guidroz, illustrations by Fahmida Azim, 411 pages, published by Kokila, an imprint of Penguin Group, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-984816-19-1, (Upper elementary school/Middle school, fiction, novel in verse)

**SEVEN SPECIAL SOMETHINGS: A NOWRUZ STORY**, by Adib Khorram, illustrations by Zainab Faidhi, unpagged, published by Dial Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-5931-0826-0, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**SHAPED BY HER HANDS: POTTER MARIA MARTINEZ**, by Anna Harber Freeman and Barbara Gonzales, illustrated by Aphelandra, unpagged, published by Albert Whitman & Company, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-8075-7599-4, (Elementary school, nonfiction biography, picture book)

**SHARICE'S BIG VOICE: A NATIVE KID BECOMES A CONGRESSWOMAN**, by Sharice Davids, with Nancy K. Mays, illustrated by Joshua Mangeshig Pawis-Steckley, unpagged, published by Harper, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-06-297966-7, (Elementary school, nonfiction/autobiography, picture book)

**SISTERS OF THE NEVERSEA**, by Cynthia Leitich Smith, 307 pages, published by Heartdrum, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-06-286997-5, (Upper elementary school/Middle school, fiction)

**SONG FOR JIMI: THE STORY OF GUITAR LEGEND JIMI HENDRIX**, by Charles R. Smith, illustrated by Edel Rodriguez, unpagged, published by Neal Porter Books, an imprint of Holiday House, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-8234-4333-8, (Elementary school, nonfiction/biography, picture book)

**SOUL FOOD SUNDAY**, by Winsome Bingham, illustrated by C.G. Esperanza, unpagged, published by Abrams Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Abrams, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-4197-4771-7, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)



**SOUL LANTERNS**, by Shaw Kuzki, translated from Japanese by Emily Balistreri, 162 pages, published by Delacorte Press, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-593-17434-0, (Upper elementary school/Middle school, historical fiction)

**STROLLERCOASTER**, by Matt Ringler, illustrated by Raúl the Third and Elaine Bay, unpagged, published by Little Brown and Company: Hachette Book Group, Inc., ©2021, ISBN 978-0-316-49322-2, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**TOMATOES FOR NEELA**, by Padma Lakshmi, illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal, unpagged, published by Viking, an imprint of Penguin Random House., ©2021, ISBN 978-0-593-20270-8, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**UNSPEAKABLE: THE TULSA RACE MASSACRE**, by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Floyd Cooper, unpagged, published by Carolrhoda Books, an imprint of Lerner Publishing Group, Inc., ©2021, ISBN 978-1-5415-8120-3, (Upper elementary school/Middle school, fiction, picture book)

**WATERCRESS**, by Andrea Wang, illustrated by Jason Chin, unpagged, published by Neal Porter Books, an imprint of Holiday House., ©2021, ISBN 978-0-8234-4624-7, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**WATER LADY: HOW DARLENE ARVISO HELPS A THIRSTY NAVAJO NATION, THE** by Alice B. McGinty, illustrated by Shonto Begay, unpagged, published by Schwartz & Wade Books, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-525-64500-9, (Elementary school, nonfiction, picture book)

**WE ALL PLAY: KIMĒTAWĀNAW**, written and illustrated by Julie Flett, unpagged, published by Greystone Kids/Greystone Books Ltd., ©2021, ISBN 978-1-77164-607-9, (Kindergarten/elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**WE CAN: PORTRAITS OF POWER**, written and illustrated by Tyler Gordon, written assistance by Kasey Woods, unpagged, published by Farrar Straus Gieoux, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group, LLC, ©2021, ISBN 978-0-374-38966-6, (Elementary school, nonfiction, picture book)

**WE SHALL OVERCOME**, written and illustrated by Bryan Collier, unpagged, published by Orchard Books, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., ©2021, ISBN 978-1-338-54037-6, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**WISHES**, by Múón Thi Văñ, illustrated by Victo Ngai, unpagged, published by Orchard Books, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., ©2021, ISBN 978-1-338-30589-0, (Preschool/elementary school, fiction, picture book)



**WITHOUT SEPARATION: PREJUDICE, SEGRATION, AND THE CASE OF ROBERTO ALVAREZ**, by Larry Dane Brimner, illustrated by Maya Gonzalez, unpagged, published by Calkins Creek, an imprint of Boyds Mills & Kane, a division of Astra Publishing House, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-68437-195-2, (Elementary school, biography/nonfiction, picture book)

**YOUR LEGACY: A BOLD RECLAIMING OF OUR ENSLAVED HISTORY**, by Schele Williams, illustrated by Tonya Engel, unpagged, published by Abrams Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Abrams, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-4197-4875-2, (Elementary school, nonfiction, picture book)

**YOUR MAMA**, by NoNiega Ramos, illustrated by Jacqueline Alcantara, unpagged, published by Versify, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-328-63188-6, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

**ZONIA'S RAINFOREST**, written and illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal, unpagged, published by Candlewick Press, ©2021, ISBN 978-1-5362-0845-0, (Elementary school, fiction, picture book)

