

Bibliography of Powerful Books

Art and Beauty

Van Gogh, Vincent. *Vincent's Colors*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005.
ISBN#0811850994

Vincent van Gogh is one of the world's foremost artists. Throughout his life, he wrote to his younger brother, Theo, about his colorful, dynamic paintings. This book matches the artist's paintings with his own words.

Young, Ed. *Beyond the Great Mountains*. Chronicle Books, 2005.
ISBN#0-8118-4343-2

The author presents a visual poem about China utilizing calligraphic terms to enhance the meanings of his text and collage-like illustrations.

Ecology/Nature

Baylor, Byrd. *I'm In Charge of Celebrations*. Aladdin Paperbacks, 1995.
ISBN#0-689-80620-5

This is a story of a girl who designates special days for celebrations in the desert. With a love of the desert and its creatures, she carefully listens and watches for moments of celebration.

Hoose, Phillip & Hannah. *Hey, Little Ant*. Scholastic Inc., 1998.
ISBN#0-439-09816-5

This story presents an ecological message as a boy is about to step on an ant to kill it, and the ant puts forth an argument for why it should be allowed to live.

Literacy

Polacco, Patricia. *Thank you, Mr. Falker*. Scholastic Inc., 1998.
ISBN#043909836X

Little Trisha is overjoyed at the thought of starting school and learning how to read. But, right from the start, when she tries to read all the letters and numbers get jumbled up. When a new teacher discovers Trisha's secret - that she still can't read in the 5th grade - he sets out to help her prove to herself that she can. And will!

Polacco, Patricia. *Aunt Chip and the Great Triple Creek Dam Affair*.
Philomel Books, 1996.
ISBN#0-399-22943-4

The people of Triple Creek have stopped reading and only watch television. To protest their decision, Aunt Chip has taken to bed and not gotten up in the last fifty years. When Eli comes to visit, she teaches him, as well as the other children, the magic of reading. But when they go to the dam for more books, something unexpected happens.

Winter, Jeanette. *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq*.
Harcourt Inc., 2005. ISBN#0152054456

Alia Muhammad Baker is the librarian in Basra, Iraq. For fourteen years, her library has been a meeting place for those who love books. Until now. Now war has come, and Alia fears that the library-along with the thirty thousand books within it- will be destroyed forever.

Homelessness

Bunting, Eve. *Fly Away Home*. Clarion Books, 1991.
ISBN#0-395-55962-6

A homeless boy and his dad live at an airport, moving from terminal to terminal, trying to not bring notice to themselves. One day, when the boy sees a trapped bird find its freedom, he is given renewed hope for his own situation.

Peace and Freedom/War

Bunting, Eve. *Gleam and Glow*. Harcourt Inc., 2001.
ISBN#0-15-202596-0

The war is coming closer and Viktor, his younger sister Marina, and Mama must flee their home. They release their two fish Gleam and Glow into the family pond. The family trudges along with their few belongings until they are reunited with Papa who has been fighting with the Liberation Army. When they are finally able to return home, the family makes a dazzling discovery.

Bunting, Eve. *The Wall*. Clarion Books, 1990. ISBN# 0-395-62977-2

A young boy and his dad go to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to locate the name of the boy's grandpa. They share sadness and respect for all those that lost their lives in the war.

Fox, Mem. *Feathers and Fools*. Voyager Books Harcourt, Inc., 1989.
ISBN#0152023658

This is an allegorical tale about war between the swans and the peacocks, and it implies that war is the result of stupidity and unreasonable fear.

Gallaz, Christine and Innocenti, Roberto. *Rose Blanche*. Harcourt Brace & Co., 1985. ISBN# 0-152009183

This is the story of a brave German girl who risks her own life to feed Jewish children who were prisoners of war.

Garland, Sherry. *The Lotus Seed*. Harcourt Brace & Co., 1993.
ISBN#0-15-249465-0

In this emotional tale, a Vietnamese family flees their country to begin a life in a strange, new country. Their grandmother procures a lotus seed, which is symbolic of their heritage and hope. She says, "No matter how ugly the mud or how long the seed lies dormant, the bloom will be beautiful. It is the flower of my country."

Johnston, Tony. *The Harmonica*. Charlesbridge, 2004.

A Jewish boy is separated from his parents during the Holocaust, and his harmonica, his father's only gift to him, gives him hope for survival and keeps him alive.

Maruki, Toshi. *Hiroshima No Pika*. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1980.
ISBN#0-688-01297-3

This is a retelling of a mother's account of what happened to her family during the Flash (the atomic bomb) that destroyed Hiroshima in 1945.

Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux. *Almost to Freedom*. Scholastic Inc., 2003
ISBN#0-439-61994-7

Told from the point of view of a rag doll, Lindy and her mama are slaves that try to escape to freedom. When the family quickly scrambles to elude their perpetrators, the rag doll is left behind in the underground room of a safe house. Eventually another woman and her child recover the doll, and they take her with them in their escape to freedom.

Reuter, Elizabeth. *Best Friends*. Yellow Brick Road Press, 1993. ISBN#0-943706-181

The unfortunate story of the Holocaust is portrayed through the friendship of two girls- one who is Jewish and the other who is German. This story allows one to see what happens when people allow themselves to believe lies and to be led astray.

Tsuchiya, Yukio. *Faithful Elephants*. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951. ISBN#0395465559

(**not appropriate for younger children)

A zookeeper at the Ueno Zoo in Tokyo tells a story about a long time ago when Japan was at war. Bombs were dropped on Tokyo day and night. Some people worried about what might happen if bombs hit the city's zoo. Therefore, by command of the army, the animals were to be killed.

Individuality/Self-Esteem

Abercrombie, Barbara. *Charlie Anderson*. Aladdin Paperbacks, 1995. ISBN#0689801149

Charlie Anderson is no ordinary cat, for he is a cat that has two homes and two families that love him.

Beaumont, Karen. *I Like Myself*. Scholastic Books, 2004. ISBN#0-439-79905-8

With simple text, this rhyming book promotes the message that one should always like oneself.

Clements, Andrew. *Big Al*. Scholastic Inc., 1988. ISBN#0590444557

Big Al is a nice fish. But he is big and scary-looking. He is a fish with no friends. Then one day Big Al proves what a truly terrific fish he is- and finds a whole school of new friends!

Choi, Yangsook. *The Name Jar*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2001. ISBN#037580613

In a new country, a young Korean girl is anxious to make friends, so instead of introducing herself on the first day of school, she decides to pick a new name. When a large glass jar filled with names appears on her desk, Unhei discovers that her classmates want to help.

Dooling, Michael. *Young Thomas Edison*. Holiday House Inc., 2005.
ISBN#0-8234-1868-5

This is a captivating biography of Thomas Edison that chronicles his life from boyhood when he enjoyed experimenting with chemicals, to his entrepreneurial success as a business man and inventor. His imagination and perseverance clearly illuminate his success.

Fox, Mem. *Whoever You Are*. Harcourt Brace & Co., 1997.
ISBN#0152007873

Every day all over the world, children are laughing and crying, playing and learning, eating and sleeping. They may not look the same. They may not speak the same language. And their lives may be quite different. But, inside, they are just like you.

Krull, Kathleen. *Wilma Unlimited*. Voyager Books, 2000.
ISBN# 0-15-202098-5

This is an amazing biography of Wilma Rudolph, who overcame a crippling polio disease as a child, to be the first woman to win three Olympic gold medals in track in a single Olympics.

Lester, Helen. *Hooway for Wodney Wat*. Houghton Mifflin, 1999.
ISBN#0-395-92392-1

Rodney Rat can't produce his r's, and he is the object of much ridicule. When Camilla Capybera joins the class and becomes the class bully, Rodney Rat uses his wit to outsmart Camilla and saves the class from the big bad bully.

Lester, Helen. *Tacky the Penguin*. Houghton Mifflin Books, 1988.
ISBN#0395562333

None of the penguins can tolerate Tacky's loud habits - until they scare off a pack of hunters.

Lovell, Patty. *Stand Tall Molly Lou Mellon*. Scholastic Inc., 2001
ISBN#0-439-43452-1

Molly Lou Mellon has some idiosyncrasies, but her grandmother encourages her to "walk proudly and the world will look up to you." When she attends a new school, her positive attitude and self confidence move her toward success and new friendships.

Parr, Todd. *It's Okay to Be Different*. Little, Brown and Co.
ISBN#0-31666603-3

This book emphasizes the message that it's okay to be different. One is special and important just by being oneself.

Interpersonal Skills & Feelings

Altman, Linda Jacobs. *Amelia's Road*. Lee & Low Books, 1993.
ISBN#1-880000-04-0

Amelia Luisa Martinez belongs to a migrant farm worker family. She dreams about living in a white house with a fine back yard, a place where she will never have to take to the roads again.

Bang, Molly. *When Sophie Gets Angry- Really, Really Angry....* Scholastic Inc., 1999. ISBN#0-439-21319-3

When Sophie gets really, really angry, she runs out and eventually climbs her favorite tree and watches the world below until she feels better and returns home.

Bunting, Eve. *Going Home*. Joanna Cotler Books, 1996.
ISBN#0-329-07791-0

Although a Mexican family moves to the United States to work as migrant farm workers, the parents still look forward to the day when they can return to Mexico to work their family's land.

Greenfield, Eloise. *Grandpa's Face*. Scholastic Inc., 1988

A young girl, Tamika, loves her grandfather who is an actor. One day while rehearsing alone, Tamika catches a glimpse of her grandfather materializing into a character whose face is cold and hard. She is unable to deal with this new image of her grandfather until he talks to her, reassuring Tamika of his love for her, and telling her he could never look at her in such a cold way.

Henkes, Kevin. *Wemberly Worried*. GreenWillow Books, 2000.
ISBN#0-688-17027-7

Wemberly was a mouse that worried about everything including the first day of school. Then Mrs. Peachum, the teacher, introduced Wemberly to Jewel and in making a friend, she puts aside her worries and enjoys the day.

Medina, Jane. *The Dream on Blanca's Wall*. Wordsong, 2004.
ISBN#1-56397-740-0

These beautifully crafted poems tell the story of Blanca and the experiences she encounters coming from a poor, Mexican family whose parents speak little English, and whose brothers and friends make fun of her academic endeavors. These touching poems are written both in English and Spanish.

Nolen, Jerdine. *In My Momma's Kitchen*. Scholastic Inc., 1999.
ISBN#0-439-32927-2

This is a heartfelt story about a family's wonderful and memorable experiences that all occur in momma's kitchen.

Rylant, Cynthia. *An Angel for Solomon Singer*. Orchard Books, 1992.
ISBN#0531059782

Solomon Singer is all alone in a faceless city. He visits the Westway Café, and because of the kindness of the people there, Solomon Singer doesn't feel lonely and alone anymore.

Wyeth, Sharon Dennis. *Always My Dad*. Scholastic Inc., 1998.

A young girl has a dad that travels from place to place doing many jobs. During a visit to her grandparents rural home, she is reunited with her dad for a short while, and she realizes that he will always love her no matter where he is.

Zolotow, Charlotte. *If You Listen*. Running Press, 2002

A young girl asks her mother how she can know if her father, who has been gone a long time, still loves her. Her mother tells her to listen inside herself and she will feel his love.

Making Choices

Bunting, Eve. *Riding the Tiger*. Clarion Books, 2001.
ISBN#0-395-79731-4

This is a powerful story about a boy named Danny who proudly climbed on the tiger's back and cruised the neighborhood. Before long, however, Danny realizes that the people in the community do not respect the tiger. They fear it. This story is symbolic of what can happen when we choose temptation and conformity, and the loss of control that occurs when we "ride a tiger."

Krull, Kathleen. *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez*. Harcourt, Inc., 2003
ISBN#0-15-201437-3

This is a moving biography of Cesar Chavez from age 10 when his family lived happily on an Arizona ranch to age thirty-eight when he led a peaceful march to protest the miserable working conditions of California migrant farm workers.

Rappaport, Doreen. *Martin's Big Words*. Hyperion Books for Children, 2001.
ISBN#078680714-8

This captivating biography of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. presents his life through simple text and powerful quotations or "big words." The amazing collage-like illustrations complement the text to enhance the story.

Yolen, Jane. *Encounter*. Harcourt Brace & Co., 1992.

This is a story of Christopher Columbus as told through the eyes of a Taino boy. The story is a recount of the encounter between the natives in San Salvador and Columbus and his foreigners.

Prejudice

Bunting, Eve. *Smoky Night*. Harcourt Brace & Co., 1994. ISBN#0152699546

Set in the Los Angeles riots, this book presents the sensual realities of the riots, as well as depicts a friendship that arises from the devastating events.

Coleman, Evelyn. *White Socks Only*. Albert Whitman & Co., 1996.
ISBN#0807589551

This story is inspired by Evelyn Coleman's memories of the places she could not go and things she could not do because of her skin color.

Hamanaka, Sheila. *All the Colors of the Earth*. Scholastic Inc., 1994.
ISBN#0-439-20221-3

With simple text and colorful illustrations, this book embraces the diversity of all children.

Karr, Kathleen. *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote*. Hyperion Books for Children, 2005. ISBN#078680593-5

Based on historical facts related to the women's suffrage movement, in this fictional account, Susan Elizabeth's mother is a suffragist, fighting for the women's right to vote. When her mother is arrested and sent to prison, Susan Elizabeth makes a valiant effort to communicate with the President in behalf of her mother.

Littlesugar, Amy & Cooper, Floyd. *Freedom School Yes!* Philomel Books, 2001. ISBN#0-439-37600-9

This story is based on true facts related to the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project in which more than 600 courageous young volunteers, Black and White, risked their lives to go south into Mississippi to teach the people to read and write. In this story Annie is the new Freedom School teacher who has come to teach the children of Chicken Creek. She confronts great danger when a warning note is thrown in the window with a rock, and the church is burnt down.

Lorbiecki, Marybeth, *Sister Anne's Hands*. Dial Books for Young Readers, 1998, ISBN#0803720386

Set in the early 60's, Sister Anne comes to teach at Anna's school and deals with issues of prejudice which are at the heart of this moving, timeless tale.

When two flocks of birds begin to fear each other because of their differences, the fear grows, and soon the birds become enemies, until panic strikes and the chance for peace seems lost forever.

Swoke, Sam. *The Araboolies of Liberty Street*. Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1989. ISBN#0517569604

When the boisterous Araboolie family (dozens of them, all colors of the rainbow) and their collection of bizarre pets come to live on Liberty Street, mean General Pinch and his nasty wife are enraged. They hate anything that looks like fun or anyone who is different. This means war! But the children of Liberty Street love the Araboolies, and they cook up a wild caper that results in a very happy ending - for everybody but the terrible Pinches, of course.

Turner, Ann. *Nettie's Trip South*. Aladdin Paperbacks, 1995. ISBN#0-689-80117-3

Based on the diary of the author's great-grandmother, this is a poignant look at slavery through the eyes of Nettie, a young girl. She remembers the heaps of rags the slaves used as beds, and she is distraught by the slave auction where people are bought and sold like sacks of flour.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *The Other Side*. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2001. ISBN#0-399-23116-1

This is a moving story about the friendship that develops between Annie, a Caucasian girl, and Clover, an African American girl, who is told to never go over the fence to the other side. The fence is representative of the racial barriers that exist between Black and White people in this rural community.

Death & Dying

Coerr, Eleanor. *Sadako*. G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1993. ISBN #0399217711

The story of a brave 12 year old who struggles against leukemia ten years after the atom bomb was dropped in Hiroshima.

Friendship & Loyalty

Couric, Katie. *The Brand New Kid*. Doubleday, 2000. ISBN#0-385-50030-0

This is a touching story about a new boy in school named Lazlo who is different from the other children and is made the object of ridicule. Finally Ellie decides to befriend Lazlo, and she discovers that he is really great. Soon others are changing their attitudes about Lazlo, too.

Edwards, Becky & Armitage, David. *My Brother Sammy*. Millbrook Press, 1999. ISBN#0-7613-1417-2

A young boy comes to terms with accepting his brother who has special needs. In the end he realizes his brother is special and that he is lucky to have a special brother because that makes him special, too.

Fraustino, Lisa Rowe. *The Hickory Chair*. Arthur A. Levine Books, 2001. ISBN# 0-590-52248-5

Louis's Gran passes away, and she leaves a note hidden in one of her favorite things for each loved one in the family. All of the notes are discovered except for Louis's, who is Gran's favorite grandchild. Finally when Louis is many years older and a grandfather himself, Gran's mysterious note is revealed.

Turner, Pamela. *Hachiko*. Houghton Mifflin Co., 2004. ISBN#0618140948

This is a true story of a loyal dog named Hachiko that goes to Shibuya Station to meet its master long after the master has died.

Uchida, Yoshiko. *The Bracelet*. Philomel Books, 1993. ISBN#0-399-22503

When Emi and her Japanese-American family are forced to leave for an internment camp during WWII, Emi's best friend, Laurie Madison, gives her a bracelet as a token of their friendship. In the ensuing days, Emi misplaces the bracelet, but she comes to realize that the friendship and love in her heart goes beyond the lost bracelet.