

## AFRICAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE BOOKLIST

### PICTURE BOOKS

**Axtell, David.** *[We're Going on a Lion Hunt](#)*. (Pic Bk A)

Two girls set out bravely in search of a lion, going through long grass, a swamp, and a cave before they find what they're looking for.

**Bang, Molly.** *[Ten, Nine, Eight](#)*. (Pic Bk B)

Numbers one through ten are part of this lullaby which observes the room of a little girl going to bed.

**Barnwell, Ysaye.** *[No Mirrors in My Nana's House](#)*. (Pic Bk B)

A girl discovers the beauty in herself by looking into her Nana's eyes.

**Best, Cary.** *[Red Light, Green Light, Mama and Me](#)*. (Pic Bk B)

After taking the train downtown, Lizzie spends the day at the public library, helping her mother who is a children's librarian.

**Caines, Jeanette.** *[Just Us Women](#)*. (Pic Bk C)

A young girl and her favorite aunt share the excitement of planning a very special car trip for just the two of them.

**Chocolate, Deborah.** *[Kente Colors](#)*. (Pic Bk C)

A rhyming description of the kente cloth costumes of the Ashanti and Ewe people of Ghana and a portrayal of the symbolic colors and patterns.

**Clifton, Lucille.** *[Everett Anderson's 1,2,3](#)*. (plus 5 other Everett Anderson stories) (Pic Bk C)

As a small boy's mother considers remarriage, he considers the numbers one, two, and three--sometimes they're lonely, sometimes crowded, but sometimes just right.

**Collier, Bryan.** *[Uptown](#)*. (Pic Bk C)

Culture, community, and elegant brownstones are just a few of the things featured in this imaginative book. It gives readers a very personal tour of Harlem through the eyes of a young boy who lives in the diverse neighborhood.

**Crews, Donald.** *[Bigmama's](#)*. (Pic Bk C)

Visiting Bigmama's house in the country, young Donald Crews finds his relatives full of news and the old place and its surroundings just the same as the year before.

**Cummings, Pat.** *[Clean Your Room, Harvey Moon](#)*. (Pic Bk C)

Harvey Moon's room is a mess! There won't be any cartoons until his room is absolutely spotless. But just when Harvey thinks he's finally done, he discovers that his idea of clean is not the same as his mother's!

**Daly, Niki.** *[Jamela's Dress](#)*. (Pic Bk D)

Jamela gets in trouble when she takes the expensive material intended for a new dress for Mama, parades it in the street, and allows it to become dirty and torn.

**Daly, Niki.** *[What's Cooking, Jamela?](#)* (Pic Bk D)

Jamela is responsible for fattening up the chicken intended for Christmas dinner, but instead she gives it a name and makes it her friend.

**Dillon, Leo.** *[Rap a Tap Tap](#)*. (Pic Bk D)

Tells the life story of a ground-breaking African-American tap dancer, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson. He was one of the most popular entertainers of the 1920s-30s. People said he "talked with his feet," and in the Dillons' graceful paintings of old New York, he dances from page to page to the tune of a toe-tapping rhyme.

**Falwell, Cathryn.** *[Christmas for 10](#)*. (Pic Bk F)

Rhyming text presents a traditional Christmas celebration in which various objects and people are counted.

**Falwell, Cathryn.** *[Feast for 10](#)*. (Pic Bk F)

Numbers from one to ten are used to tell how members of a family shop and work together to prepare a meal.

**Feelings, Tom.** [\*Jambo Means Hello: Swahili Alphabet Book\*](#). (Pic Bk F)

Here is an introduction not only to the letters of the alphabet, but also to another language and culture. Each of the twenty-four letters (there are no q or x sounds in Swahili) is represented by a Swahili word, a clear phonetic pronunciation guide, and an explanation of how the word fits into African life.

**Flournoy, Valerie.** [\*The Patchwork Quilt\*](#). (PicBk F)

Using scraps cut from the family's old clothing, Tanya helps her grandmother and mother make a beautiful quilt that tells the story of her family's life.

**Ford, Juwanda.** [\*K is for Kwanzaa\*](#). (Pic Bk F)

An introduction describes the origin of the holiday and the Seven Kwanzaa Principles that guide the seven-day celebration and teach positive life lessons.

**Greenfield, Eloise.** [\*My Daddy and I\*](#). (Boardbook)

Father and son work and play together.

**Hale, Sarah Josepha and photo-illustrated by Bruce McMillan.** [\*Mary had a Little Lamb\*](#). (Pic Bk H)

A contemporary interpretation of the well-known nineteenth-century nursery rhyme about the school-going lamb.

**Hayes, Sarah.** [\*Eat Up, Gemma\*](#). (Pic Bk H)

Baby Gemma refuses to eat, throwing her breakfast on the floor and squashing her grapes, until her brother gets an inspired idea.

**Hesse, Karen.** [\*Come On, Rain\*](#). (Pic Bk H)

A young girl eagerly awaits a coming rainstorm to bring relief from the oppressive summer heat.

**Hoffman, Mary.** [\*Amazing Grace\*](#). (Pic Bk H)

Although a classmate says that she can't play Peter Pan in the school play because she is black, Grace discovers that she can do anything she sets her mind to do.

**Hoffman, Mary.** [\*Boundless Grace\*](#). (Pic Bk H)

When Grace gets the opportunity to go to Africa and visit with her father and his new family, she feels a little strange. But Nana says families are what you make them, and Grace is going to make the most of hers!

**Hooks, Bell.** [\*Happy to be Nappy\*](#). (Pic Bk H)

Filled with images of the many hairstyles worn by African Americans, this is a lovely jaunt into the world of hair.

**Hopkinson, Deborah.** [\*Under the Quilt of Night\*](#). (Pic Bk H)

An Underground Railroad story that is both heartbreaking and brimming with hope. This outstanding book follows one girl as she leads her family from slavery to the path of freedom.

**Hort, Lenny.** [\*How Many Stars in the Sky?\*](#) (Pic Bk H)

One night when Mama is away, Daddy and child seek a good place to count the stars in the night sky.

**Howard, Elizabeth Fitzgerald.** [\*Aunt Flossie's Hats \(And Crab Cakes Later\)\*](#). (Pic Bk H)

Sara and Susan share tea, cookies, crab cakes, and stories about hats when they visit their favorite relative, Aunt Flossie.

**Isadora, Rachel.** [\*Bring on the Beat\*](#). (Pic Bk I)

Illustrations and rhyming text evoke the rhythms of jazz music.

**Johnson, Angela.** [\*When I am Old with You\*](#). (Pic Bk J)

A child imagines being old with Granddaddy and joining him in such activities as playing cards all day, visiting the ocean, and eating bacon on the porch.

**Jones, Joy.** [\*Tambourine Moon\*](#). (Pic Bk J)

Noni is afraid as she and her granddaddy walk home, until he tells her how he met her Granma Ismay one dark night in Alabama and how the big yellow moon came to light up the sky.

**Kroll, Virginia.** [\*Jaha and Jamil Went Down the Hill: An African Mother Goose\*](#). (Pic Bk K)

A delightful treasury of rhyme fashioned after Mother Goose favorites that give readers a fresh new perspective of beloved classics.

**Kroll, Virginia.** [\*Masai and I\*](#). (Pic Bk K)

Linda, a little girl who lives in the city, learns about East Africa and the Masai in school, and imagines what her life might be like if she were Masai.

**Lee, Spike.** [\*Please, Baby, Please.\*](#) (Pic Bk L)

A toddler's antics keep his mother busy as she tries to feed him, watch him on the playground, give him a bath, and put him to bed.

**Lester, Julius.** [\*Sam and the Tigers.\*](#) (Pic Bk L)

Follows the adventures of a little boy named Sam when he matches wits with several tigers who want to meet him.

**McKissack, Patricia.** [\*The Honest-to-Goodness Truth.\*](#) (Pic Bk M)

After promising never to lie, Libby learns that it's not always necessary to blurt out the whole truth either.

**Mitchell, Margaree King.** [\*Uncle Jed's Barbershop.\*](#) (Pic Bk M)

Despite serious obstacles and setbacks Sarah Jean's Uncle Jed, the only black barber in the county, pursues his dream of saving enough money to open his own barbershop.

**Myers, Christopher.** [\*The Black Cat.\*](#) (Pic Bk M)

On an eye-opening journey through urban landscapes, a stray black cat leaps, listens, and dances to the city's pulsating beats while searching for a home.

**Nelson, Vaunda.** [\*Almost to Freedom.\*](#) (Pic Bk N)

Told from the perspective of a black rag doll named Sally, this story follows a slave girl and her parents as they escape from slavery along the Underground Railroad to a place called Freedom.

**Nikola, Lisa.** [\*Summer Sun Risin'\*](#) (Pic Bk N)

An African American boy enjoys a summer day on his family's farm, milking the cows, fishing, and having fun.

**Olaleye, Isaac.** [\*Bitter Bananas.\*](#) (Pic Bk O)

When baboons begin stealing the sweet palm sap that Yusuf sells at the market near his Nigerian village, what is he to do?

**Pegram, Laura.** [\*Daughter's Day Blues.\*](#) (Pic Bk P)

Phyllis Mae thinks that her little brother gets too much attention, so her Nana and Momma decide to have a special Daughter's Day celebration.

**Pilkey, Dav.** [\*The Paperboy.\*](#) (Pic Bk P)

A paperboy and his dog enjoy the quiet of the early morning as they go about their rounds.

**Polacco, Patricia.** [\*Chicken Sunday.\*](#) (Pic Bk P)

To thank Miss Eula for her wonderful Sunday chicken dinners, three children sell decorated eggs to buy her a beautiful Easter hat.

**Polacco, Patricia.** [\*Mrs. Katz and Tush.\*](#) (Pic Bk P)

A long-lasting friendship develops between Larnel, a young African-American, and Mrs. Katz, a lonely, Jewish widow, when Larnel presents Mrs. Katz with a scrawny kitten without a tail.

**Ringgold, Faith.** [\*Cassie's Word Quilt.\*](#) (Pic Bk R)

Names the people and objects that make a girl's New York City apartment, school, and neighborhood special.

**Ringgold, Faith.** [\*Tar Beach.\*](#) (Pic Bk R)

A young girl dreams of flying above her Harlem home, claiming all she sees for herself and her family.

**Schertle, Alice.** [\*Down the Road.\*](#) (Pic Bk S)

Hetty feels grownup when Papa and Mama allow her to go by herself to Birdie's Emporium to buy some eggs.

**Schroeder, Alan.** [\*Carolina Shout.\*](#) (Pic Bk S)

A young girl describes the music she hears in the cries of various vendors on the streets of Charleston, South Carolina.

**Schroeder, Alan.** [\*Ragtime Tumpie.\*](#) (Pic Bk S)

Tumpie, a young black girl who will later become famous as the dancer Josephine Baker, longs to find the opportunity to dance amid the poverty and vivacious street life of St. Louis in the early 1900s.

**Scruggs, Afi.** [\*Jump Rope Magic\*](#). (Pic Bk S)

Shameka and her jump rope rhymes bring joy to everyone, even Miss Minnie, the meanest person in the neighborhood.

**Siegelson, Kim.** [\*Dancing the Ring Shout\*](#). (Pic Bk S)

Toby is old enough to attend the Ring Shout, the tradition from west Africa and the American South celebrating the hard work of harvest, but he cannot find an object that makes a noise which will speak from his heart to God's ears.

**Stock, Catherine.** [\*Where are You Going, Manyoni?\*](#) (Pic Bk S)

A child living near the Limpopo River in Zimbabwe encounters several wild animals on her way to school.

**Stuve-Bodeen, Stephanie.** [\*Elizabethi's Doll\*](#). (Pic Bk S)

When a young Tanzanian girl gets a new baby brother, she finds a rock, which she names Eva, and makes it her baby doll.

**Stuve-Bodeen, Stephanie.** [\*Elizabethi's School\*](#). (Pic Bk S)

Although she enjoys her first day at school, Elizabethi misses her family and wonders if it wouldn't be better to stay home.

**Tarpley, Natasha.** [\*Bippity Bop Barbershop\*](#). (Pic Bk T)

A story celebrating a young African-American boy's first trip to the barbershop.

**Williams, Sherley Anne.** [\*Working Cotton\*](#). (Pic Bk W)

A young black girl relates the daily events of her family's migrant life in the cotton fields of central California.

**Williams, Sherley Anne.** [\*Girls Together\*](#). (Pic Bk W)

Four African American girls slip out of their housing project and spend a day playing together before returning home with a gift for the friend who was not able to join them.

**Williams-Garcia, Rita.** [\*Catching the Wild Waiyuuzee\*](#). (Pic Bk W)

As she tries to escape her mother's efforts to "plait-a-plait" and "string-a-bead" her hair, a young girl imagines herself escaping into a jungle.

**Winter, Jeanette.** [\*Follow the Drinking Gourd\*](#). (Pic Bk W)

By following the directions in a song, "The Drinking Gourd," taught them by an old sailor named Peg Leg Joe, runaway slaves journey north along the Underground Railroad to freedom in Canada.

**Woodson, Jacqueline.** [\*The Other Side\*](#). (Pic Bk W)

Two girls, one white and one black, gradually get to know each other as they sit on the fence that divides their town.

**Woodson, Jaqueline.** [\*We had a Picnic this Sunday Past\*](#). (Pic Bk W)

A young girl describes her various relatives and the foods they bring to the annual family picnic.

**Young, Ruth.** [\*Golden Bear\*](#). (Pic Bk Y)

Golden Bear and his human companion learn to play the violin, talk to a ladybug, make mudpies, wish on stars, and dream together.

## I CAN READS

**Bang, Molly.** [\*Wiley and the Hairy Man\*](#): (adapted from an American Folk Tale) (ICR B)

With his mother's help, Wiley outwits the hairy creature that dominates the swamp near his home by the Tombigbee River.

**Monjo, F. N.** [\*The Drinking Gourd\*](#). (ICR M)

Sent home alone for misbehaving in church, Tommy discovers that his house is a station on the underground railroad.

## IN-BETWEENS

**Cameron, Ann.** [\*The Stories Julian Tells\*](#) (plus 3 additional Julian stories) (IBT C14513)

Relates episodes in seven-year-old Julian's life which include getting into trouble with his younger brother Huey, planting a garden, trying to grow taller, losing a tooth, and finding a new friend.

**Curtis, Gavin.** [\*The Bat Boy and His Violin\*](#). (IBT C9434b)

Reginald is more interested in practicing his violin than in his father's job managing the worst team in the Negro Leagues, but when Papa makes him the bat boy and his music begins to lead the team to victory, Papa realizes the value of his son's passion.

**Greenfield, Eloise.** [\*Grandpa's Face\*](#). (IBT G8372gr)

Seeing her beloved grandfather making a mean face while he rehearses for one of his plays, Tamika becomes afraid that someday she will lose his love and he will make that mean face at her.

**Hartfield, Claire.** [\*Me and Uncle Romie: A Story Inspired by the Life and Art of Romare Bearden\*](#). (IBT H253cL-me)

A boy from North Carolina spends the summer in New York City visiting the neighborhood of Harlem, where his uncle, collage artist Romare Bearden, grew up. Includes a biographical sketch of Bearden and instructions on making a story collage.

**Hathorn, Elizabeth.** [\*Sky Sash So Blue\*](#). (IBT H2865sk)

The special sky blue sash that a young slave girl offers to give her older sister for her wedding dress becomes a tie that binds the family together when the sister moves away.

**Hoffman, Mary.** [\*The Color of Home\*](#). (IBT H6754ma-co)

Hassan, newly-arrived in the United States and feeling homesick, paints a picture at school that shows his old home in Somalia as well as the reason his family had to leave.

**Hopkinson, Deborah.** [\*A Band of Angels: A Story Inspired by the Jubilee Singers\*](#). (IBT H7773ba)

The daughter of a slave forms a gospel singing group and goes on tour to raise money to save Fisk University.

**Hopkinson, Deborah.** [\*Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt\*](#). (IBT H777s)

A young slave stitches a quilt with a map pattern which guides her to freedom in the North.

**Howard, Elizabeth Fitzgerald.** [\*Virgie Goes to School with us Boys\*](#). (IBT H8324vi)

In the post-Civil War South, a young African American girl is determined to prove that she can go to school just like her older brothers.

**Lester, Julius.** [\*Black Cowboy, Wild Horses: A True Story\*](#). (IBT L5672b)

A black cowboy is so in tune with wild mustangs that they accept him into the herd, thus enabling him single-handedly to take them to the corral.

**Lester, Julius.** [\*What a Truly Cool World\*](#). (IBT L5672wh)

Discovering that making a world takes a lot of work, God calls on his secretary Bruce and the angel Shaniqua to help him create bushes, grass, flowers, and butterflies.

**Lester, Julius.** [\*Why Heaven is Far Away\*](#). (IBT L5672ju-whh)

When people and animals try to climb ladders to Heaven to escape problems with snakes, God, His secretary Bruce, and the angel Shaniqua decide that Heaven needs to be much further away.

**Lorbiecki, Marybeth.** [\*Sister Anne's Hands\*](#). (IBT L555si)

Seven-year-old Anna has her first encounter with racism in the 1960s when an African American nun comes to teach at her parochial school.

**McKissack, Patricia.** [\*Flossie and the Fox\*](#). (IBT M2179fl)

A wily fox, notorious for stealing eggs, meets his match when he encounters a bold little girl in the woods who insists upon proof that he is a fox before she will be frightened.

**McKissack, Patricia.** [\*Goin' Someplace Special\*](#). (IBT M2179go)

In segregated 1950s Nashville, a young African American girl braves a series of indignities and obstacles to get to one of the few integrated places in town: the public library.

**McKissack, Patricia.** [\*Ma Dear's Aprons\*](#). (IBT M2179ma)

Young David Earl always knows what day of the week it is, because his mother, Ma Dear, has a different apron for every day except Sunday.

**McKissack, Patricia.** [\*Mirandy and Brother Wind\*](#). (IBT M2179mi)

To win first prize in the Junior Cakewalk, Mirandy tries to capture the wind for her partner.

**Miller, William.** [\*Richard Wright and the Library Card\*](#). (IBT M6198r)

Based on a scene from Wright's autobiography, *Black boy*, in which the seventeen-year-old African-American borrows a white man's library card and devours every book as a ticket to freedom.

**Nelson, Kadie.** [\*Thunder Rose\*](#). (IBT )

Unusual from the day she is born, Thunder Rose performs all sorts of amazing feats, including building metal structures, taming a stampeding herd of steers, capturing a gang of rustlers, and turning aside a tornado.

**Nolen, Jerdine.** [\*Big Jabe\*](#). (IBT N)

Momma Mary tells stories about a special young man who does wondrous things, especially for the slaves on the Plenty Plantation.

**Polacco, Patricia.** [\*Pink and Say\*](#). (IBT P7568pa-pi)

Say Curtis describes his meeting with Pinkus Aylee, a black soldier, during the Civil War, and their capture by Southern troops. Based on a true story about the author's great-great-grandfather.

**Ringgold, Faith.** [\*Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky\*](#). (IBT R474au)

With Harriet Tubman as her guide, Cassie retraces the steps escaping slaves took on the Underground Railroad in order to reunite with her younger brother.

**Siegelson, Kim.** [\*In the Time of the Drums\*](#). (IBT Si225i)

Mentu, an American-born slave boy, watches his beloved grandmother, Twi, lead the insurrection at Teakettle Creek of Ibo people arriving from Africa on a slave ship.

**Taylor, Mildred D.** [\*The Friendship\*](#). (IBT T2168fr)

Four children witness a confrontation between an elderly black man and a white storekeeper in rural Mississippi in the 1930's.

**Taylor, Mildred D.** [\*The Gold Cadillac\*](#). (IBT T2168g)

Two black girls living in the North are proud of their family's beautiful new Cadillac until they take it on a visit to the South and encounter racial prejudice for the first time.

**Thomas, Joyce Carol.** [\*I Have Heard of a Land\*](#). (IBT T3643i)

Describes the joys and hardships experienced by an African-American pioneer woman who staked a claim for free land in the Oklahoma territory.

**Turner, Ann Warren.** [\*Nettie's Trip South\*](#). (IBT T8513n)

A ten-year-old northern girl encounters the ugly realities of slavery when she visits Richmond, Virginia, and sees a slave auction.

## CHILDREN'S FICTION

**Collier, James Lincoln.** [\*Jump Ship to Freedom\*](#). (Fic C6903ju)

The second book in the Arabus family saga finds young Daniel trying to retrieve the notes that ensure his and his mother's freedom, until he is forced aboard a boat and headed for certain slavery in the West Indies.

**Collier, James Lincoln.** [\*War Comes to Willy Freeman\*](#). (Fic C6903wa)

A free thirteen-year-old black girl in Connecticut is caught up in the horror of the Revolutionary War and the danger of being returned to slavery when her patriot father is killed by the British and her mother disappears.

**Collier, James Lincoln.** [\*Who is Carrie?\*](#) (Fic C6903wh)

A young black girl living in New York City in the late eighteenth century observes the historic events taking place around her and at the same time solves the mystery of her own identity.

**Curtis, Christopher Paul.** [\*Bud, Not Buddy\*](#). (Fic C9413bu)

Ten-year-old Bud, a motherless boy living in Flint, Michigan, during the Great Depression, escapes a bad foster home and sets out in search of the man he believes to be his father--the renowned bandleader, H.E. Calloway of Grand Rapids.

- Curtis, Christopher Paul.** [\*The Watsons go to Birmingham-1963\*](#). (Fic C9413wa)  
The ordinary interactions and everyday routines of the Watsons, an African American family living in Flint, Michigan, are drastically changed after they go to visit Grandma in Alabama in the summer of 1963.
- English, Karen.** [\*Francie\*](#). (Fic En36fr)  
When the sixteen-year-old boy whom she tutors in reading is accused of attempting to murder a white man, Francie gets herself in serious trouble for her efforts at friendship.
- Fenner, Carol.** [\*Yolonda's Genius\*](#). (Fic F3633yo)  
Yolonda's brother, Andrew, doesn't talk very much and has trouble learning to read, but is able to create beautiful music with the old harmonica left to him by their father. When bullies destroy Andrew's cherished harmonica, it falls to Yolonda to replace the instrument and reveal her brother's musical genius to the world.
- Flake, Sharon.** [\*The Skin I'm In\*](#). (Fic F5998sk)  
Thirteen-year-old Maleeka, uncomfortable because her skin is extremely dark, meets a new teacher with a birthmark on her face and makes some discoveries about how to love who she is and what she looks like.
- Grimes, Nikki.** [\*Jazmin's Notebook\*](#). (Fic G882ja)  
Jazmin, an Afro-American teenager who lives with her older sister in a small Harlem apartment in the 1960s, finds strength in writing poetry and keeping a record of the events in her sometimes difficult life.
- Hamilton, Virginia.** [\*M. C. Higgins, the Great\*](#). (Fic H1812m)  
As a slag heap, the result of strip mining, creeps closer to his house in the Ohio hills, fifteen-year-old M.C. is torn between trying to get his family away and fighting for the home they love.
- Hamilton, Virginia.** [\*Second Cousins\*](#). (Fic H1812se)  
Cousins Cammy Coleman and Eloise Odie are forced to face some dark family secrets when their second cousins visit from New York City.
- Johnson, Angela.** [\*Heaven\*](#). (Fic J631he)  
Fourteen-year-old Marley's seemingly perfect life in the small town of Heaven is disrupted when she discovers that her father and mother are not her real parents
- Johnson, Angela.** [\*Running Back to Ludie\*](#). (Fic J631ru)  
The narrator of these poems hasn't seen her mother in years. She knows Ludie only through old photographs and distant memories from early childhood. But now she's going to be with Ludie again, if only for a few days. She is finally going to discover how it feels to be her mother's daughter.
- Johnson, Angela.** [\*Toning the Sweep\*](#). (Fic J631to)  
On a visit to her grandmother Ola, who is dying of cancer in her house in the desert, fourteen-year-old Emmie hears many stories about the past and her family history and comes to a better understanding of relatives both dead and living.
- McKissack, Patricia.** [\*Color Me Dark: The Diary of Nellie Lee Love, the Great Migration North\*](#). (Fic M2179co)  
Nellie Lee Love moves north with her family to Chicago -- the land of opportunity -- hoping to escape the racism of the rural south. Though life in this northern city is exciting, Nellie Lee sees that racism knows no boundaries.
- McKissack, Patricia.** [\*The Dark Thirty: Southern Tales of the Supernatural\*](#). (Fic M2178d)  
A collection of ghost stories with African American themes, designed to be told during the Dark Thirty--the half hour before sunset--when ghosts seem all too believable.
- McKissack, Patricia.** [\*Let My People Go: Bible Stories Told by a Free Man of Color, to his Daughter, Charlotte, in Charleston, South Carolina, 1806-1816\*](#). (Fic M217Le)  
The daughter of a free black man who worked as a blacksmith in Charleston, South Carolina, in the early 1800s recalls the stories from the Bible that her father shared with her, relating them to the experiences of African Americans.
- Myers, Walter Dean.** [\*Somewhere in the Darkness\*](#). (Fic M9929so)

A teenage boy accompanies his father, who has recently escaped from prison, on a trip that turns out to be an often painful time of discovery for them both.

**Paulsen, Gary.** *[Nightjohn](#)*. (Fic P2835ni)

Twelve-year-old Sarny's brutal life as a slave becomes even more dangerous when a newly arrived slave offers to teach her how to read.

**Paulsen, Gary.** *[Sarny, A Life Remembered](#)*. (Fic P2835sa)

Continues the adventures of Sarny, the slave girl Nightjohn taught to read, through the aftermath of the Civil War during which time she taught other blacks and lived a full life until age ninety-four.

**Pearsall, Shelley.** *[Trouble Don't Last](#)*. (Fic P31694tr)

Samuel, an eleven-year-old Kentucky slave, and Harrison, the elderly slave who helped raise him, attempt to escape to Canada via the Underground Railroad.

**Robinet, Harriet Gillam.** *[Forty Acres and Maybe a Mule](#)*. (Fic R5524fo)

Born with a withered leg and hand, Pascal, who is about twelve years old, joins other former slaves in a search for a farm and the freedom which it promises.

**Sebestyen, Ouida.** *[Words by Heart](#)*. (Fic S219ou-wo)

A young black girl struggles to fulfill her papa's dream of a better future for their family in the southwestern town where, in 1910, they are the only blacks.

**Tate, Eleanora.** *[Thank You, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.!](#)* (Fic T1872th)

The children of Gumbo Grove Elementary School discover the contributions of many famous African-Americans during Black History Month.

**Taylor, Mildred D.** *[The Land](#)*. (Fic T2168La)

After the Civil War, Paul, the son of a white father and a black mother, finds himself caught between the two worlds of colored folks and white folks as he pursues his dream of owning land of his own.

**Taylor, Mildred D.** *[Mississippi Bridge](#)*. (Fic T2168mi)

During a heavy rainstorm in 1930s rural Mississippi, a ten-year-old white boy sees a bus driver order all the black passengers off a crowded bus to make room for late-arriving white passengers and then set off across the raging Rosa Lee River.

**Taylor, Mildred D.** *[Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry](#)*. (Fic T2168r)

A black family living in Mississippi during the Depression of the 1930s is faced with prejudice and discrimination which its children do not understand.

**Taylor, Mildred D.** *[Song of the Trees](#)*. (Fic T2168s)

During the Depression, a rural black family deeply attached to the forest on their land tries to save it from being cut down by an unscrupulous white man.

**Woods, Brenda.** *[The Red Rose Box](#)*. (Fic W8614re)

In 1953, Leah Hopper dreams of leaving the poverty and segregation of her home in Sulphur, Louisiana, and when Aunt Olivia sends train tickets to Los Angeles as part of her tenth birthday present, Leah gets a first taste of freedom.

**Woodson, Jacqueline.** *[If You Come Softly](#)*. (Fic W8685if)

After meeting at their private school in New York, fifteen-year-old Jeremiah, who is black and whose parents are separated, and Ellie, who is white and whose mother has twice abandoned her, fall in love and then try to cope with people's reactions.

**Woodson, Jacqueline.** *[Last Summer with Maizon](#)*. (Fic W8688la)

Eleven-year-old Margaret tries to accept the inevitable changes that come one summer when her father dies and her best friend Maizon goes away to a private boarding school.

**Woodson, Jacqueline.** *[Locomotion](#)*. (Fic W8685ja-Lo)

Told entirely through poetry, a young boy's story about his parents' death in a fire, the loss of his little sister to a foster home, and his efforts to reunite tells a story of loss, love, and hope.

**Yarbrough, Camille.** *[The Shimmershine Queens](#)*. (Fic Y208sh)

Two fifth graders try to uplift themselves and their classmates out of a less than beautiful urban present by encouraging dreams and the desire to achieve them.

## FOLKTALES

**Farmer, Nancy.** [\*Casey Jones' Fireman: The Story of Sim Webb\*](#). (398.2 F229c)

Even though the railroad fireman senses danger ahead, he follows his engineer's command to increase the train's power so that the mysterious whistle blows.

**Hamilton, Virginia.** [\*The Girl Who Spun Gold\*](#). (398.2 H181gi)

In this West Indian version of the Rumpelstiltskin story, Lit'mahn spins thread into gold cloth for the king's new bride.

**Hamilton, Virginia.** [\*Her Stories: African American Folktales, Fairy Tales, and True Tales\*](#). (398.2 H18h)

A dramatic new collection of 25 compelling tales from the female African American storytelling tradition. Each story focuses on the role of women -- both real and fantastic -- and their particular strengths, joys and sorrows

**Medearis, Angela Shelf.** [\*Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale\*](#). (398.2 M467t)

On a farm in the Texas Hill Country, a young boy confronts a strange critter that tries to steal his family's last meal.

**San Souci, Robert D.** [\*Cendrillon: A Caribbean Cinderella\*](#). (398.2 Sa58cen)

A Creole variant of the familiar Cinderella tale set in the Caribbean and narrated by the godmother who helps Cendrillon.

**San Souci, Robert D.** [\*Secret of the Stones: An African American Folktale from Arkansas\*](#). (398.2 Sa54se)

When they try to find out who is doing their chores while they are working in the field, a childless couple discovers that the two stones they have brought home are actually two bewitched orphans.

**Cummings, Pat.** [\*Ananse and the Lizard: A West African Tale\*](#). (398.209667 C912a)

This lively retelling with vibrant illustrations captures all the mischief and humor of Anansi as the spider trickster discovers the name of the Chief's royal daughter.

**Bryan, Ashley.** [\*Beautiful Blackbird\*](#). (398.20968 B84b)

A Zambian folktale about how Blackbird shared a touch of his coveted blackness with the other birds while reminding them about their own beauty.

**Lester, Julius.** [\*John Henry\*](#). (398.21 L567j)

Retells the life of the legendary African American hero who raced against a steam drill to cut through a mountain.

**San Souci, Robert D.** [\*The Faithful Friend\*](#). (398.21 Sa54a)

A retelling of the traditional tale from the French West Indies in which two friends, Clement and Hippolyte, encounter love, zombies, and danger on the island of Martinique.

**San Souci, Robert D.** [\*Sukey and the Mermaid\*](#). (398.21 Sa58s)

Unhappy with her life at home, Sukey receives kindness and wealth from Mama Jo the mermaid.

**San Souci, Robert D.** [\*The Talking Eggs: A Folktale from the American South\*](#). (398.210973 Sa54t)

A Southern folktale in which kind Blanche, following the instructions of an old witch, gains riches, while her greedy sister makes fun of the old woman and is duly rewarded.

**Hamilton, Virginia.** [\*When Birds Could Talk and Bats Could Sing: The Adventures of Bruh Sparrow, Sis Wren, and Their Friends\*](#). (398.24 H18wh)

A collection of stories, featuring sparrows, jays, buzzards, and bats, based on those African American tales originally written down by Martha Young on her father's plantation in Alabama after the Civil War.

**Lester, Julius.** [\*Further Tales of Uncle Remus: The Misadventures of Brer Rabbit, Brer Wolf, the Doodang, and All the Other Creatures\*](#). (series) (398.245 L567f)

A retelling of the classic Afro-American tales relating the adventures and misadventures of Rabbit and his friends.

## POETRY

**Stephoe, Javaka,** Illustrator. [\*In Daddy's Arms I am Tall: African Americans Celebrating Fathers\*](#). (811.008 In9)

A collection of poems celebrating African-American fathers.

**Rochelle, Belinda** (selected by). [\*Words with Wings: A Treasury of African American Poetry and Art\*](#). (811.08 W8914)

A compilation of words and images from African-American poets and artists.

**Dunbar, Paul Lawrence**. [\*Jump Back, Honey: Poems\*](#). (811.4 D911j)

An illustrated collection of poems by Paul Laurence Dunbar.

**Feelings, Tom** (Illustrator). [\*Soul Looks Back in Wonder\*](#). (811.508 Os83)

Artwork and poems by such writers as Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes, and Askia Toure portray the creativity, strength, and beauty of their African American heritage.

**Hughes, Langston**. [\*Carol of the Brown King: Nativity Poems\*](#). (811.52 H874ca)

Five poems translated from the Spanish present the story of the first Christmas from different perspectives.

**Bolden, Tonya**. [\*Rock of Ages: A Tribute to the Black Church\*](#). (811.54 B637r)

A poem celebrating the role of church in the lives and history of African Americans, from the time of slavery through the struggle for civil rights to the well-established churches of today.

**Greenfield, Eloise**. [\*Nathaniel Talking\*](#). (811.54 G837n)

Beautifully composed in a variety of styles--rap, blues, and free verse--these 18 poems offer a black child's insights into his own heart and mind, and into the lives of family and friends.

**Grimes, Nikki**. [\*Come Sunday\*](#). (811.54 G822c)

A little girl describes a typical Sunday from the moment her mother wakes her up through the different elements of the worship service in church.

**Grimes, Nikki**. [\*My Man Blue: Poems\*](#). (811.54 G8824m)

A collection of poems describes a young boy's life with his working mother as he establishes his own identity and develops a close relationship with his mother's friend, Blue.

**Perdomo, Willie**. [\*Visiting Langston\*](#). (811.54 H8735Zp)

A little girl and her father visit the house where acclaimed African-American poet Langston Hughes lived. A poet herself, the girl is thrilled.

**Johnson, Angela**. [\*The Other Side: Shorter Poems\*](#). (811.54 J6298o)

A collection of poems reminiscent of growing up as an African-American girl in Shorter, Alabama.

**Myers, Walter Dean**. [\*Angel to Angel: A Mother's Gift of Love\*](#). (811.54 M992a)

An illustrated collection of poems about African American children and their mothers.

**Myers, Walter Dean**. [\*Blues Journey\*](#). (811.54 M992b)

The African experience in America is celebrated with a soulful blues poem that details the long journey from the Middle Passage to life today.

**Myers, Walter Dean**. [\*Harlem: A Poem\*](#). (811.54 M992h)

A poem celebrating the people, sights, and sounds of Harlem.

**Thomas, Joyce Carol**. [\*Brown Honey in Broomwheat Tea: Poems\*](#). (811.54 T364b)

A collection of poems exploring the theme of African-American identity.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

**Ryan, Pam Munoz**. [\*When Marian Sang: The True Recital of Marian Anderson: The Voice of the Century\*](#). (Biography An2375ma-ry)

A moving portrait of Marian Anderson, this book is a beautiful marriage of text and illustrations. The text invites us into her life, and we ache with Marian every time she faces a struggle.

**Bridges, Ruby**. [\*Through My Eyes\*](#). (Biography B7639t)

Ruby Bridges recounts the story of her involvement, as a six-year-old, in the integration of her school in New Orleans in 1960.

**Grimes, Nikki**. [\*Talkin' About Bessie: The Story of Aviator Bessie Coleman\*](#). (Biography C677eL-gr)

A biography of the woman who became the first licensed African-American pilot.

- Davis-Pinkney, Andrea.** [\*Duke Ellington: The Piano Prince and His Orchestra.\*](#) (Biography EL553p)  
A brief recounting of the career of this jazz musician and composer who, along with his orchestra, created music that was beyond category.
- Davis-Pinkney, Andrea.** [\*Ella Fitzgerald: The Tale of a Vocal Virtuosa.\*](#) (Biography F576pi)  
Fitzgerald's inspiring story is told in the voice of Scat Cat Monroe, a feline fan whose imagined narrative sings with infectious scat rhythms.
- McKissack, Patricia and Frederick McKissack.** [\*Young, Black and Determined: A Biography of Lorraine Hansberry.\*](#) (Biography H198mc)  
A biography of the black playwright who received great recognition for her work at an early age.
- Gaines, Ann.** [\*Matthew Henson and the North Pole Expedition.\*](#) (Biography H398g)  
A brief biography of the black explorer and seaman who, together with Robert E. Peary, discovered the North Pole in 1909.
- Rappaport, Doreen.** [\*Martin's Big Words: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.\*](#) (Biography 921 KING RAP)  
A stunning tribute to civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- Farris, Christine King.** [\*My Brother Martin: A Sister Remembers Growing Up with the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.\*](#) (Biography K585ma)  
Christine King Farris, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s sister, and artist Chris Soentpiet bring us a unique, moving look at the boyhood of a civil rights leader.
- Krull, Kathleen.** [\*Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World's Fastest Woman.\*](#) (Biography R835k)  
A biography of the African-American woman who overcame crippling polio as a child to become the first woman to win three gold medals in track in a single Olympics.
- Adler, David A.** [\*A Picture Book of Harriet Tubman.\*](#) (Biography T79a)  
A picture book biography of the black woman who escaped from slavery to become famous as a conductor on the Underground Railroad.
- Myers, Walter Dean.** [\*Malcolm X; A Fire Burning Brightly.\*](#) (Biography X105my)  
This compelling narrative for picture-book readers explores Malcolm's journey from his tragic childhood to his life as a street hustler, a Black Muslim, a prison inmate, and a fearless leader in the struggle for blacks to achieve equality.

## OTHER NON-FICTION

- Hansen, Joyce.** [\*Breaking Ground, Breaking Silence: The Story of New York's African Burial Ground.\*](#) (305.567 H197b)  
Describes the discovery and study of the African burial site found in Manhattan in 1991, while excavating for a new building, and what it reveals about the lives of black people in Colonial times.
- Haskins, James.** [\*Bound for America: The Forced Migration of Africans to the New World.\*](#) (306.362 H273b)  
Discusses the European enslavement of Africans, including their capture, branding, conditions on slave ships, shipboard mutinies, and arrival in the Americas.
- Brady, April.** [\*Kwanzaa Karamu: Cooking and Crafts for a Kwanzaa Feast.\*](#) (394.268 B729k)  
Just as a traditional African storyteller, or griot, weaves a tale, Ms. Brady shares her love of Kwanzaa, its history, its meaning, and special craft and recipe ideas for the holiday.
- McKissack, Patricia and Frederick McKissack.** [\*Black Hands, White Sails: The Story of African-American Whalers.\*](#) (639.28 M217b)  
A history of African-American whalers between 1730 and 1880, describing their contributions to the whaling industry and their role in the abolitionist movement.
- Toyomi, Igu.** [\*I See the Rhythm.\*](#) (780.8996 Ig8i)  
A celebration of African-American music and the far-reaching impact it has had on the world.
- Lester, Julius.** [\*Blues Singers: Ten who Rocked the World.\*](#) (781.643.1 L567b)  
In the voice of a grandfather passing on a legacy to a younger generation, renowned author Julius Lester introduces ten of the hottest black blues singers of our time.

- Curry, Barbara.** [\*Sweet Words so Brave: The Story of African-American Literature.\*](#) (810.9896.1 C937s)  
A survey of the history of African American literature, from slave narratives to the present, told in the voice of a grandfather speaking to his granddaughter.
- Greenfield, Eloise.** [\*How they Got Over: African Americans and the Call of the Sea.\*](#) (920.009296 G837h)  
Profiles African American men and women who have had a strong connection with the sea, from slaves whose owners sent them to work on ships to today's fishermen, naval officers, and marine biologists
- Hansen, Joyce.** [\*Women of Hope: African Americans who Made a Difference.\*](#) (920.72 H198w)  
Features photographs and biographies of thirteen African-American women, including Maya Angelou, Ruby Dee, and Alice Walker.
- Winter, Jonah.** [\*Fair Ball: 14 Great Stars from Baseball's Negro Leagues.\*](#) (927.96357 W734f)  
Short biographies of fourteen outstanding players in the United States Negro Leagues, including Pop Lloyd, Oscar Charleston, and Buck Leonard.
- Hansen, Joyce.** [\*Bury Me Not in a Land of Slaves: African Americans in the Time of Reconstruction.\*](#) (973.0496073 H197b)  
An account of African-American life in the period of Reconstruction following the Civil War, based on first-person narratives, contemporary documents, and other historical sources.
- McKissack, Pat.** [\*Days of Jubilee: The End of Slavery in the United States.\*](#) (973.7 M217d)  
Slave narratives, letters, diaries, military orders, and other documents chronicle the various stages leading to the emancipation of slaves in the United States.
- Collier, Christopher.** [\*Reconstruction and the Rise of Jim Crow, 1864-1896.\*](#) (975.04 C69re)  
Describes the struggles following the Civil War to decide how to deal with the newly freed slaves, through the years of Reconstruction, Jim Crow, sharecropping, and segregation.
- McKissack, Patricia.** [\*Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters.\*](#) (975.03 M217c)  
Describes the customs, recipes, poems, and songs used to celebrate Christmas in the big plantation houses and in the slave quarters just before the Civil War.
- Tillage, Leon Walter.** [\*Leon's Story.\*](#) (975.655 T461L)  
The son of a North Carolina sharecropper recalls the hard times faced by his family and other African Americans in the first half of the twentieth century and the changes that the civil rights movement helped bring about.
- Katz, William Loren.** [\*Black Pioneers: An Untold Story.\*](#) (977.496 K159b)  
A biographical history of influential African American pioneers and freedom fighters in the Midwest, including Sara Jane Woodson, Peter Clark, and Dred Scott.
- Stanley, Jerry.** [\*Hurry Freedom: African Americans in Gold Rush California.\*](#) (979.400496 St25h)  
Recounts the history of African Americans in California during the Gold Rush while focusing on the life and work of Mifflin Gibbs.