

DETROIT  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY

# 2018 AFRICAN AMERICAN BOOKLIST

KNOWING AND TEACHING:  
AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE



# 2018 AFRICAN AMERICAN BOOKLIST

The Detroit Public Library has published its African American Booklist for 50 years. This bibliography provides a selected list of books by and/or about African Americans.

The works of fiction and nonfiction for adults, children and young adults were reviewed and recommended by librarians of the Detroit Public Library.

The African American Booklist began as a way to commemorate Black History Month and since that time has continued to feature the accomplishments of African Americans in the literary world. Our booklist has become an annual tradition in the community and continues to be a highly anticipated publication for book lovers all across the nation.

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# BLACK NATIONAL ANTHEM

## LIFT EV'RY VOICE AND SING

Lyrics by: James Weldon Johnson  
(1871-1938)

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has  
taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has  
brought us,  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun  
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chastening rod,  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been  
watered,  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of  
the slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past,  
Till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who has by Thy might  
Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we  
met Thee,  
Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we  
forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  
May we forever stand.  
True to our God,  
True to our native land.

## FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**“With African American children’s literature, story is both a way of knowing and a way of teaching.”**

Rudine Sims Bishop

Our 2018 Booklist reflects a great deal of passion for literature that focuses on African American children. The beautiful cover is an adaptation of the vibrant artwork of Javaka Steptoe’s *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat*, winner of the 2017 Randolph Caldecott Medal and the 2017 Coretta Scott King Award for illustration. We are grateful to have received permission from Mr. Steptoe and Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, to use his artwork as part of our cover design.

We have included an interview of Mr. Steptoe by author, journalist and Kresge Artist Fellow Desiree Cooper. Ms. Cooper’s brief essay touches on Mr. Steptoe’s relationship with his father, author John Lewis Steptoe, creator of award winning picture books for children. John Steptoe was also a recipient of the Caldecott Medal for *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters* and *The Story of Jumping Mouse*. Like father, like son!

Rudine Sims Bishop, Ed.D., has written an insightful essay examining the historical significance of African American children’s literature. Dr. Bishop earned her doctorate in curriculum development with a concentration in reading and children’s literature at Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. She is professor emerita at The Ohio State University and the 2017 recipient of the American Library Association’s 2017 Coretta Scott King-Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement. We are truly honored that she has shared with us her considerable expertise and perspective in this area.

I am especially proud and appreciative of the work of the children’s librarians at the Detroit Public Library who had the awesome task of recommending twenty classic books that are “must reads” for young people and the young at heart. The books represent a “mirror” for many children to see themselves and a “window” for others to look through. I also want to thank the librarians who recommended the best of 2017 fiction and non-fiction titles for adults and children.

I hope you find a title here that you can enjoy or one to share with the young people in your life. Thank you for your continued support of the Detroit Public Library where we provide pathways to literacy and learning for everyone.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jo Anne G. Mondowney".

Jo Anne G. Mondowney  
Executive Director



# In Daddy's Arms I AM TALL

**African Americans Celebrating Fathers**



# NURTURING THE CREATIVE SPIRIT: JAVAKA STEPTOE'S PATHWAY TO ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

by Desiree Cooper

Becoming Javaka Steptoe was no happy accident. The Brooklyn native has spent decades honing his skills as a teacher, artist and author, stacking up awards including two Coretta Scott King awards for his brilliant children's books. His latest book, *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat*, is the winner of the 2017 Caldecott Medal.

It didn't hurt that his father was artist and author John Steptoe, who, when Javaka was a teenager, won a Caldecott Medal in 1987 for his most famous book, *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*. Steptoe gives credit to his parents for his own successful career, but not because his father's fame gave him a leg-up. It's because his parents knew how to raise a creative child.

Instead of forging master-apprentice relationship with his accomplished father, Steptoe thinks of his father more as a gentle guide. "He mostly let me come to him with questions if I was struggling," said Steptoe. "He left it to me to follow whatever path I wanted to follow."

His father's biggest gift to him was providing an environment that was full of imagination, exploration, and the basics for all young artists — plenty of paper and crayons. "I didn't have to grow up with parents who said, 'So you're good at art, but what are you really going to do with your life?'" he said.

It's this kind of permission that Steptoe believes all parents can give to their children, especially children of color who may live in communities where arts are inaccessible or not supported.

"Our art is our voice," he said, adding that it's important not only to be consumers of art, but creators as well. "Our art is our proof that we have critical minds and our experiences are valid."

That's why he has dedicated his life as a teacher and an artist to cultivating the imagination of all children, particularly children of color. His body of work is a testament to his conviction, including his 1997 debut book, *In Daddy's Arms I Am Tall: African Americans Celebrating Fathers*, which earned him a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award and an NAACP Image Award nomination. In 2010 he illustrated the beautiful *Jimi: Sounds Like a Rainbow*, about the childhood of legendary guitarist Jimi Hendrix. *Radiant Child* is the vibrant, evocative, childhood tale of Haitian-American artist Jean-Michel Basquiat.



## NURTURING (con't)



**Javaka Steptoe**

In some ways, any book about Basquiat is a book about his youth, since he died of a drug overdose in 1988 when he was only 27. The artist had a meteoric rise to fame in the 1980s, hobnobbing with the New York art elite, including his friend and mentor, Andy Warhol. Back then, his work was selling for upwards of \$50,000. In 2017, nearly 30 years after his death, an untitled Basquiat work sold for \$110.5 million to a Japanese collector. It was the highest amount ever drawn by an American painter.

That's the part of Basquiat's story that many know: The mythic legend of the young, black street artist with natural talent who died tragically. "It saddens and angers me to think of how many young artists of color have discovered Jean-Michel Basquiat, have been moved by his work, only to be told he was a lucky drug addict in the right place at the right time," said Steptoe at his Caldecott acceptance speech in June 2017.


Steptoe pushes against the stereotype of artists who have "native" talent and magically become famous. Instead, he urges readers to think about what it takes to raise a "radiant child." Like Steptoe, Basquiat was raised in a loving, two-parent family that supported his creative energy. The famous painter spoke fluent French, Spanish and English and he attended private and public schools.

To illustrate this fresh perspective, Steptoe scoured the streets of his native Brooklyn, and, like his subject, painted on found objects, merging his own style with the famous painter's. As the story progresses, Steptoe's art includes collage and is intentionally more referential to Basquiat's work.

"I was interested in the power we all have to shift the narrative," said the Brooklyn native. "I can go into schools and tell children that I made this book because I wanted the whole world to think differently about this artist. You can do the same thing about anything that's important to you."

You can't read *Radiant Child* without realizing that the book is as much about the young artist as it is about Basquiat's mother, a Puerto Rican named Matilde, who played a central role in the painter's early development. Page after page shows how Matilde sat on the floor with her son to draw, how she exposed him to museums and public art, and how she nursed him back to health after a car accident by giving him a copy of *Gray's Anatomy*.





Basquiat was devastated when his mother was institutionalized with severe depression. It's one more way that Steptoe's life and Basquiat's intertwined— Steptoe's mother succumbed to mental illness when he was 20 years old.

When thinking about how to depict Basquiat's childhood challenges, Steptoe remembered the advice his father gave him. "My father told me that the sky's the limit, but there are pitfalls, too," he said. "You have to learn that not every mistake or challenge is life-ending; you have to make choices."

That's why he decided to address mental illness in *Radiant Child*.

"Children have to learn to deal with difficulty and figure out how to transform that energy into something beautiful," said Steptoe. "Art does that. You don't sing the blues to feel bad, you sing it to feel good — to allow yourself to go on and flourish. Pain helps us to get up and have agency so that we're not suffering. Create a song, paint a painting, make an invention, build a company that cures cancer. We don't often realize how much pain motivates us to strive for better."

It's just one of many lessons he hopes he can impart to readers of *Radiant Child* – both to the young minds which are inspired by his work, and to the loving parents who will foster them.

*Desiree Cooper is a former attorney, a Pulitzer Prize-nominated journalist, a 2015 Kresge Artist Fellow, and author of Know the Mother, a 2017 Michigan Notable Book.*

“

**Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his needs, is good for him.**

**- Maya Angelou**

”

*Knowing and Teaching:*

# AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

*by Rudine Sims Bishop, Ed.D.*

It was not until the late 1960s and the early 1970s that a substantial body of work that can be labeled African American children's literature began to appear. For purposes of this essay, African American children's literature is that created by African Americans, featuring African American characters or themes, intended for readers from pre-school to about age eighteen. That includes some works usually considered young adult (YA) literature, aimed at 12 to 18-year-olds. Age designations, however, are merely guidelines; it is impossible to effectively match books to readers based solely on age.

## **BEFORE 1900: THE ROOTS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE**

The development of an African American children's literature required a critical mass of young readers as well as adult writers committed to creating works for them to read. Given the circumstances in which most African Americans found themselves before 1865, a critical mass of young African American readers was slow in developing. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, some of the seeds of an African American children's literature had been sown. Oral literature, in the form of stories and songs such as the spirituals, had established some roots. Black church publications, such as the *Christian Recorder* of the AME Church, often addressed some content specifically to children. In the late nineteenth century some Black women's periodicals, such as *Our Women and Children Magazine*, published material addressed to children and provided a forum for African American women writers. In 1890 Amelia E. Johnson became the first African American writer to publish a novel for youth, *Clarence and Corinne; or God's Way*.



## **EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY: THE BROWNIES' BOOK**

The first significant occurrence in twentieth century African American children's literature grew out of the establishment of the NAACP. One of its founders, W.E.B. Du Bois, became editor of the organization's journal, *The Crisis*. Du Bois annually published a children's issue of *The Crisis*, which was the most popular issue of the year. In light of this popularity and his deep concern for the education and welfare of Black children, he started a magazine for "all children, but especially *ours* — the children of the sun."

Du Bois nicknamed the children of the sun “Brownies” and called the magazine *The Brownies’ Book*. It was a monthly publication, lasting from January 1920 to December 1921. Its goals were announced in the October 1919 issue of *The Crisis*:

Deftly intertwined with the mission of entertainment will go the endeavor:

- a. To make colored children realize that being “colored” is a normal, beautiful thing.
- b. To make them familiar with the history and achievements of the Negro race.
- c. To make them know that other colored children have grown into beautiful, useful and famous persons.
- d. To teach them delicately a code of honor and action in their relations with white children.
- e. To turn their little hurts and resentments into emulation, ambition and love of their homes and companions.
- f. To point out the best amusements and joys and worthwhile things of life.
- g. To inspire them to prepare for definite occupations and duties with a broad spirit of sacrifice.



The contents of *The Brownies’ Book* were consistent with its goals. Both Du Bois and Jessie Fauset, the literary editor, contributed regularly to the magazine. Fauset wrote a column as The Judge, who advised a group of children on the proper ways to conduct themselves in order to become refined, informed citizens who would make a positive difference in their society. Du Bois’ column, “As the Crow Flies,” focused on international news. The crow, “black and O so beautiful,” flew over the world and brought back news for the Brownies. The Crow paid particular attention to events that were relevant to African Americans and their struggles, as well as other people of color or oppressed people around the world. Not merely objective reports of current events, the Crow columns were sometimes critical of the actions of national governments, including ours. If Fauset’s column was meant to socialize the Brownies, Du Bois’ was meant to politicize them, to prepare them to be informed citizens of the world.

*The Brownies’ Book* was also a literary endeavor. It included stories, poems, games, biographical sketches, letters to the editor from children and adults, submissions from readers, and numerous appealing photographs of African American children. It also included features that called attention to achievements of “Brownies,” such as high school graduations.

Although it reached 3500 subscribers, the magazine was unable to sustain itself financially. Nevertheless, it was an important milestone in the development of African American children’s



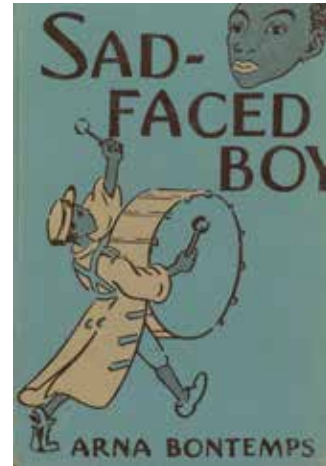
## LITERATURE (con't)

literature. It was a forum for some of the writers and artists of the Harlem Renaissance, including Langston Hughes. It affirmed the need for an African American children's literature and offered one model of what such a literature might be like. Moreover, it provided an ideological and philosophical foundation on which such a literature could be built.

### ***AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE BEGINS TO TAKE HOLD: 1930s-1950s***

#### Arna Bontemps: Leading the Way

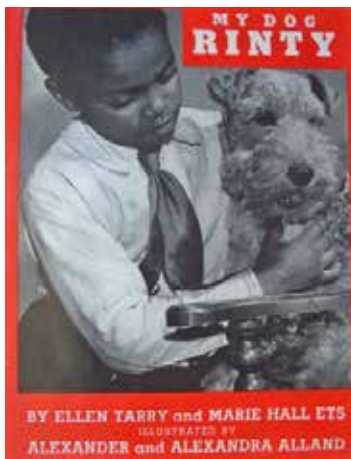
In the years from the 1930s to the 1950s, Harlem Renaissance poet Arna Bontemps pulled African American children's literature into the mainstream of the industry on his authorial coattails. Bontemps published sixteen children's books—fiction, poetry, biography, historical fiction, history, fantasy, and picture books. He was the first African American to be honored by a Newbery Medal selection committee; *The Story of the Negro* (1948) was named a 1949 Newbery Honor Book. (The John Newbery Medal is given by the American Library Association to the author of the “most distinguished contribution to American literature for children” published the year prior to the award.) He also produced what is arguably the first African American urban novel for young readers, *Sad-Faced Boy* (1937), the story of three boys who hopped a train from Alabama to New York to visit their uncle in Harlem. Laced with humor and with the informal language of southern African Americans of that time, it was an appealing odyssey. Bontemps arguably created a number of other “firsts” in African American children's literature: the skilled use of authentic Black vernacular; a comprehensive anthology of Black poetry selected for young readers; and historical novels as a way to engage readers with Black history.



***Sad-Faced Boy***

#### Ellen Tarry: Picture Book Beginnings

Some of the first sprouts of African American picture books emerged in the work of Ellen Tarry in the 1940s. Picture books are those in which the text and the illustrations are interdependent. Usually 24 to 32 pages long, they are dual narratives, in which the illustrations do not merely echo the text, but amplify and extend it. Awarded a scholarship to Bank Street College, Tarry was influenced by the progressive educational ideas of the school's founder Lucy Sprague Mitchell. Inspired by Mitchell, Tarry produced some of the first picture storybooks both written and illustrated by African Americans and published by a “mainstream” publisher. *Hezekiah Horton*, a story about a car-crazy young boy, and *The Runaway Elephant* were illustrated by Oliver Harrington, a well-known Black cartoonist.



***My Dog Rinty***

Tarry's best-known and most highly praised book was *My Dog Rinty* (1946), co-authored with Marie Hall Ets and illustrated with black and white photographs. Rinty got into trouble around the neighborhood and David's father decreed that he had to go. A kind, well-to-do neighbor adopted Rinty, took him to obedience school and hired David to walk him. Once people learned that Rinty's mischief was related to a special talent, he became something of a neighborhood hero. The book was praised for its authentic portrayals of a middle class Black family that valued education and literacy; the socio-economic diversity in the Harlem community; and Harlem as a "village" that cared for its children.

Tarry was among the first African American writers to emphasize in her books positive relations between black characters and white ones. In her autobiography *The Third Door*, she wrote: "When we are united, there will be no door in America marked 'colored' or 'white'. Instead there will be the third door—free

from racial designations—through which all Americans, all of God's children will walk in peace and dignity."

#### Lorenz Graham: People Are People

Another writer who was concerned about inter-group relations was Lorenz Graham, who expressed the view that "people are people." Although he was born the same year as Hughes and Bontemps, Graham did not join them in Harlem in the 1920s; he went off to teach at a mission school in Liberia. When he returned, he decided to write books to make clear to young people that, contrary to popular characterizations of the day, Africans were ordinary people, not savage heathens. His first children's book, *Tales of Momolu* (1946), related stories of an ordinary ten-year-old boy in a Liberian village. Graham also published *How God Fix Jonah* (1946), a collection of Bible stories narrated in the vernacular English of the Liberians. Five of the stories from *Jonah* were later issued as single stories in picture book format. *Every Man Heart Lay Down* (1970), (the Christmas story); *God Wash the World and Start Again* (1971); *A Road Down in the Sea* (1970); *David He No Fear* (1971) and *Hongry Catch the Foolish Boy* (1973) constitute a unique contribution to American children's literature.

Graham is probably best known, however, for his series of "town" novels: *South Town* (1958), *North Town* (1965), *Whose Town* (1969), and *Return to South Town* (1976). They chronicle David Williams's struggles to overcome numerous racist obstacles and become a practicing physician in his southern hometown. In their confronting of racism and racist practices, Graham's books are similar to those of Jesse Jackson (*not* the civil rights activist), whose series of books

## LITERATURE (con't)

beginning with *Call Me Charley* (1945) follow Charles Moss through his schooling in an Ohio suburb, where his family are the only African Americans and Charley must fight for acceptance in the face of racism. Graham and Jackson introduced to African American children's literature the novel of racial conflict.

### African American Poetry for Children

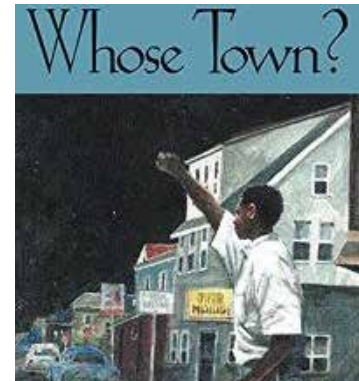
The 1940s and 1950s saw the blossoming of African American poetry appropriate for children, produced mainly by writers who generally wrote for adults. Langston Hughes, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Countee Cullen, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Effie Lee Newsome all had poetry collections published during those decades. Dunbar had died long before *Little Brown Baby* was published in 1940, but Bertha Rodgers, the compiler, claimed it was the first gathering in book form of the Dunbar poems most suitable for children. Given his enduring popularity, it was an appropriate gesture.

In 1932 Langston Hughes published *The Dream Keeper*, a selection of his poems he thought most suitable for children. Some of them are among the most frequently anthologized in American children's poetry collections, including "Dreams" (Hold fast to dreams), "April Rain Song," "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "Mother to Son," and "I, Too."

Countee Cullen, another Harlem Renaissance poet, published two books of poems for children: *The Lost Zoo* (1940) and *My Lives and How I Lost Them* (1942). "Co-authored" by Christopher Cat, *The Lost Zoo* describes the animals that were left off Noah's ark. Illustrated by Charles Sebree's watercolor portraits of creatures such as the sleepabitmore, the poems are cautionary tales possibly aimed at the junior high school students Cullen was teaching at the time. The other book relates how Christopher Cat lost all but one of his nine lives. A number of Cullen's other poems such as "Incident" ("Once riding in old Baltimore") continue to be anthologized in poetry collections for young people.

Gwendolyn Brooks' collection for children was *Bronzeville Boys and Girls* (1956). Each poem is named for an African American child living in a Chicago community. The poems focus on ordinary childhood experiences and typical child emotions. Many continue to be anthologized. For example, Keziah, who has a secret place, and Cynthia, for whom the snow is achingly beautiful, are familiar in many contemporary classrooms.

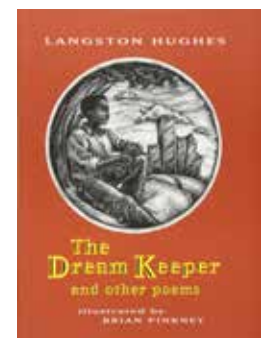
Effie Lee Newsome, one of the regular contributors to *The Brownies' Book*, became the first African American poet to devote her career to writing poems for children. Her poems often celebrated nature, but also celebrated children and their everyday



***Whose Town***



**Gwendolyn Brooks**



***The Dream Keeper***



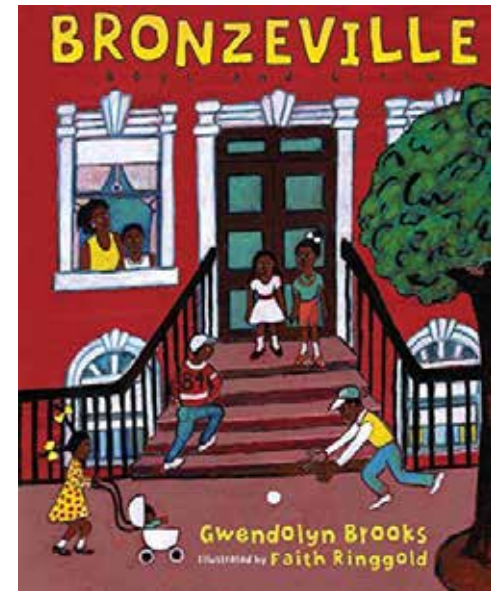
lives. Many of her poems contained fresh visual imagery (e.g. fireflies as golden confetti in the night sky) that would appeal to children. Her book, *Gladiola Garden*, illustrated by acclaimed artist Lois Mailou Jones, was published in 1940 by Associated Publishers, the firm established by Carter G. Woodson.

### Contemporary African American Children's Literature: After 1965

In the 1960s civil rights activists and urban uprisings shone a spotlight on African Americans and called attention to social and educational inequities. Lyndon Baines Johnson launched his Great Society program, and Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Among other things, the ESEA provided funds to school districts for the education of low income families, many of whom were African American, and made funds available to libraries for buying books and other instructional materials. Children's book publishers responded by issuing more books, including those featuring African Americans. The Council on Interracial Books for Children, organized in 1965, established a writers' contest for African Americans that led to the first published books of Walter Dean Myers and Mildred Taylor, who became premier children's literature authors of the latter third of the century.

In 1965, in the *Saturday Review*, educator Nancy Larrick labeled the world of children's literature "all-white." She had studied three years' publications of American children's books (1962, 1963, 1964) and discovered that only 6.7% of about 5,000 books included any African Americans, and only four-fifths of one percent focused on contemporary African Americans. She further noted that, in terms of literary quality, the preponderance of the books featuring African Americans were mediocre at best, and stereotypical at worst.

One of the incentives, then, for the development of an African American children's literature was to fill a void, to make African Americans visible in books. But mere visibility was not enough. As indicated in Du Bois' stated goals for *The Brownies' Book*, it was important to African American writers to provide information, generally omitted from school curricula, about African American history and African American achievements. Furthermore, given the blatant stereotypes, misinformation, and misinterpretation of African American culture that had appeared in literature for adults and children since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was important to affirm the beauty and the worth of African American children and, in the words of poet Lucille Clifton, to authenticate their world.



*Bronzeville Boys and Girls*

“The Council on Interracial Books for Children, organized in 1965, established a writers' contest for African Americans that led to the first published books of Walter Dean Myers and Mildred Taylor, who became premier children's literature authors of the latter third of the century.”

## LITERATURE (con't)

The latter half of the 1960s saw significant progress in African American children's literature's status as an essential element of American children's literature. Virginia Hamilton's first book, *Zeely* (1967) launched a career during which Hamilton won every national and international award for which her work was eligible, including the first MacArthur Foundation Fellowship (aka "genius award") given to a children's literature author. Arguably, *Zeely* also ushered in contemporary (post-1965) African American children's literature. Appearing at a time when much focus in children's literature featuring African Americans was on urban problems, it was the story of Elizabeth (self-named Geeder), an ordinary Midwestern African American girl with an extraordinary imagination. It also celebrated an African beauty that was in contrast to the prevailing European standard. The title character Zeely was:

"more than six and a half feet tall, thin and deeply dark as a pole of Ceylon ebony... her thin oblong head didn't seem to fit quite right on her shoulders. She had very high cheekbones and her eyes seemed to turn inward on themselves. Geeder...knew that it [her face] was calm, it had pride in it, and that the face was the most beautiful she had ever seen."

In 1969, Julius Lester's *To Be a Slave*, illustrated by Tom Feelings, became the second African American children's book to be cited as a Newbery Honor Book. In that same year the Coretta Scott King (CSK) Book Award was established to commemorate the work of Dr. King and to honor his widow. Approaching its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the CSK Awards are still presented by the American Library Association to "authors and artists of African descent whose distinguished books promote an understanding and appreciation of the American Dream."

“One of the incentives, then, for the development of an African American children's literature was to fill a void, to make African Americans visible in books.”

Also in 1969, author-artist John Steptoe published his first book, *Stevie*, in which Robert recollects the time when his mother baby-sat young Stevie, which brought unwelcome change to Robert's daily life. In an unprecedented move, *Stevie* was pre-published in its entirety, in full color, in the August 19, 1969 issue of *Life*, when Steptoe was just shy of his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. This realistic story of an urban Black family, narrated with informal Black vernacular, and with Steptoe's distinguished illustrations, was a milestone in the publication of African American picture books.

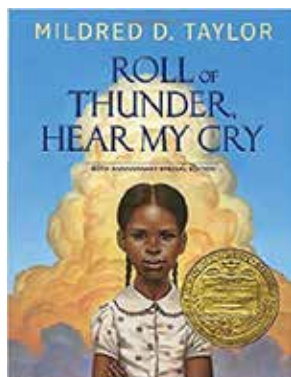
By the end of the 1970s African American children's literature was garnering well-deserved critical praise. Virginia Hamilton and Mildred Taylor became the first African Americans to receive the Newbery Medal – Hamilton in 1975 for *M.C. Higgins, the Great*; and Taylor in 1977



**Coretta Scott King**



**Stevie**



**Roll of Thunder,  
Hear My Cry**

for *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. African American artist Leo Dillon and his wife and collaborator Diane, were awarded consecutive Randolph Caldecott Medals in 1976 for *Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears* and in 1977 for *Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions*. The Caldecott Medal awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, goes to the artist of "the most distinguished American picture book for children" published in the prior year.

Walter Dean Myers, one of the most highly regarded African American writers, declared this about being a Black writer: "It meant understanding the nuances of value, of religion, of dreams. It meant capturing the subtle rhythms of language and movement and weaving it all, the sound and the gesture, the sweat and the prayers, into the recognizable fabric of black life." Although African Americans have much in common with other Americans, we also share with each other a collective cultural experience and worldview shaped by our collective experience as Black Americans. This shared cultural experience is reflected in the thematic emphases of African American children's literature and the specific cultural references that help to characterize it as a distinctive body of work. Woven through the literature, across the years and across genres, are a few recurring thematic and stylistic threads. In general, African American authors and artists have (1) celebrated the strengths of the Black family, (2) borne witness to African Americans' struggle for freedom, equality, and dignity, (3) nurtured Black children by reflecting back to them their beauty and their competencies, (4) accurately reflected, through language and content, African American cultural contexts. With African American children's literature, story is both a way of knowing and a way of teaching.

The growth of contemporary African American children's literature was led by the contributions of several outstanding writers and illustrators. Poets Nikki Giovanni, Eloise Greenfield, and Lucille Clifton, joined later by Nikki Grimes and a few others, produced a body of children's poetry that celebrated the formerly invisible Black child. Many of their collections were published in picture book format, adding attractive visual images to the verbal expressions of feelings, thoughts and ideas. African American children's poetry tends to emphasize pride in identity and heritage, family and other relationships, and the importance of love as one of life's fundamentals. As in other genres, Black vernacular language also appears in many poems, e.g. "Harriet Tubman didn't take no stuff/Wasn't scared of nothing neither" from Eloise Greenfield's poem in *Honey I Love and Other Love Poems*.

In the late sixties and into the 1980s, Steptoe, Clifton and Greenfield were prominent creators of picture book texts. By the end of the century, they had been joined by numerous others. As a general rule, three thematic threads were dominant



## LITERATURE (con't)

“

**With African American children’s literature, story is both a way of knowing and a way of teaching.**

”

in African American picture books of that time: family love, pride in Black heritage, history and heroes, and fostering self-love and self-esteem. One author whose books consistently focused on family is Angela Johnson [e.g. *Do Like Kyla* (1990), *One of Three* (1991), *When I Am Old with You* (1990)]. One distinctive aspect of African American picture books about family is an emphasis on the loving relationship between a young child and an elderly relative – grandparent, great aunt or uncle, etc. A milestone in that regard was Valerie Flourney’s *The Patchwork Quilt* (1985), illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. Tanya and her grandmother have a very special relationship, played out in their co-creation of an heirloom quilt. As in other such books, the elder functions as a source of wisdom, knowledge, family history, and cultural history.

Another distinctive aspect of late twentieth century African American picture books is a focus on recent past history. Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard, for example, produced several books drawn from her own family history. In *Aunt Flossie’s Hats (and Crab Cakes Later)* (1991), Great Aunt Flossie’s numerous hats evoke family stories for her young great nieces. Patricia McKissack also produced picture books drawn from her family history. *Mirandy and Brother Wind* (1988), in which Mirandy tries to capture the wind to be her dance partner, was inspired by a photograph of her grandparents. McKissack, unlike many writers of African American picture book texts of the time, created a number of books with elements of fantasy, such as *Flossie and the Fox* (1986) and *Nettie Jo’s Friends* (1989).

A number of African American picture books deal head-on with bolstering Black children’s self-esteem. Myles and Sandra Pinkney’s *Shades of Black* (2000), for example, celebrates, with the refrain “I am Black; I am unique,” the variety of skin color, hair texture, and eye color to be found among African Americans. A few books, such as *I Love My Hair* (2001) and, much earlier, *Cornrows* (1979), celebrate Black hair.

A focus on pride in heritage is exemplified by a couple of Lucille Clifton’s early books, *The Black BC’s* (1970), and *All Us Come Cross the Water* (1973). Both offer information about African Americans’ roots in Africa. *The Black BC’s* also calls attention to significant people, places and events in African American history. More recently, Phil Mendez’ *The Black Snowman* (1991) teaches Jacob about his African heritage.



## African American Illustrators

The growth of African American picture books was accompanied by increased numbers of African American illustrators. Beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s, nine illustrators became the first to attract major critical attention and to win recognition by the children's literature establishment audience: John Steptoe, Tom Feelings, Ashley Bryan, Jerry Pinkney, Carole Byard, Pat Cummings, Leo and Diane Dillon and Donald Crews. While these artists differ in style and in their views toward their work, its function, and its primary targeted audience, as a group they created the modern visual image of Black children and families in American children's literature. They have portrayed Black Americans with dignity and respect, and with the kind of specific detail that, in effect, not only is distinctively African American, but also, in its very specificity, universal. These pioneering illustrators have been joined by numerous award-winning others, including Bryan Collier, Kadir Nelson, Faith Ringgold, James Ransome, Jan Spivey Gilchrist, Floyd Cooper, and R. Gregory Christie. One remarkable phenomenon is that we have progressed to the point where a second generation of award-winning artists are making their own careers in the field: Brian Pinkney, son of Jerry Pinkney; Christopher Myers, son of Walter Dean Myers; Javaka Steptoe, son of John Steptoe; and Nina Crews, daughter of Don Crews.

Fiction, both contemporary and historical, has been a vehicle for “authenticating” the world of Black children by portraying what Eloise Greenfield called the “lives they know they lead.” Much of African American fiction was aimed at older readers (middle school and beyond). The pioneering author of African American young adult fiction was Walter Dean Myers. Although Myers wrote in several genres, including poetry, history, and picture books, he was best known for his urban novels featuring African American teen-age boys. He masterfully captured their rhetoric and their ways of solving the problems they faced. Although his books are not preachy and they were often laced with humor, they have a moral foundation, offering hope and the conviction that it is possible, even in adverse circumstances, to make right choices.

The other premier creator of African American fiction was Virginia Hamilton, who wrote, in addition to contemporary realistic fiction, biography, speculative fiction, fantasy, historical fiction, and folk collections. Hamilton's realistic characters usually reflected her mid-western

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**They have portrayed Black Americans with dignity and respect, and with the kind of specific detail that, in effect, not only is distinctively African American, but also, in its very specificity, universal.**

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## LITERATURE (con't)



U.S. Representative  
John Lewis

“In fact, in an era in which visual images play a large role in much of children’s literature, African American writers and artists have been producing outstanding nonfiction books in picture book format.”

background as opposed to the more common urban coastal settings. She mined her own family history as well as African American history to create from what she called “the known, the remembered, and the imagined.”

Sadly, some of the pioneering authors and artists who began in the 1960s and 70s to create the canon of African American children’s literature have passed away in recent years — Virginia Hamilton, Walter Dean Myers, Tom Feelings, Leo Dillon, Carole Byard, Patricia and Fred McKissack. But as we have moved into the twenty-first century others have continued the tradition. Two more Black writers have received the Newbery Medal: Christopher Paul Curtis (*Bud, Not Buddy*, 1999) and Kwame Alexander (*The Crossover*, 2014). It is notable that they were both men, since the vast majority of authors of African American children’s books are women, while the majority of illustrators are men.

Twenty-first century African American children’s literature is being enriched by the creations of several other outstanding writers and artists, too numerous to name, among whom are Jacqueline Woodson, who won the National Book Award for her free verse memoir *Brown Girl Dreaming*, and whose picture books such as *The Other Side*, have received widespread acclaim. Rita Williams-Garcia has also received critical acclaim, especially for her trilogy about the Gaither sisters and their family: *One Crazy Summer*, *P.S. Be Eleven*, and *Gone Crazy in Alabama*. Jason Reynolds, somewhat like Walter Dean Myers, writes about Black urban boys, also to critical acclaim.

Nonfiction and biography are also currently popular. Tonya Bolden, for example, has produced a number of historical nonfiction books featuring lesser known people and events, including *Pathfinders: The Journeys of Sixteen Extraordinary Black Souls* (2017). In fact, in an era in which visual images play a large role in much of children’s literature, African American writers and artists have been producing outstanding nonfiction books in picture book format (e.g. Vaunda Micheaux Nelson’s *Bad News for Outlaws*; Ashley Bryan’s *Freedom Over Me*; Carole Boston Weatherford’s *Freedom in Congo Square* and *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement*).

Among notable recent phenomena was the publication of U.S. Representative John Lewis’s three-volume memoir *March: Book One*, *March: Book Two*, and *March: Book Three*. Co-authored by Andrew Aydin and illustrated by Nate Powell, the books are in comic book format, although they are



appropriate for an older (middle school and up) audience. Framed by Rep. Lewis' attendance at the inauguration of President Barack Obama, they trace Rep. Lewis' involvement in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, including being badly beaten on the Selma march. Book Three won a record four awards from the American Library Association and a 2017 National Book Award for Young People's Literature.

2017 was also the year that Javaka Steptoe received both the Caldecott Medal and the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award for *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat*. He was only the third African American artist to receive the Caldecott Medal (Leo Dillon and Jerry Pinkney were the other two). It was fitting that this son of John Steptoe, whose picture book *Stevie* helped to launch the contemporary African American literature canon almost fifty years ago, should be recognized for his work carrying on the tradition and expanding the canon in his own unique way.

In this age when diversity is the buzzword, the good news is that, although African American children's books comprise only a small percentage of children's books published each year, there is a body of excellent books being produced by outstanding African American writers and artists. Looking back to *The Brownies' Book*, one can see that this body of work more than fulfills its goals and does so in a way that honors both the creators and the children whose lives and images are reflected.

*Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop, Professor Emerita at The Ohio State University, is the recipient of the American Library Association's 2017 Coretta Scott King-Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement. Her outstanding scholarship on the history and cultural significance of African American children's literature has influenced students, teachers, librarians, and writers.*

## RESOURCES: AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Bishop, Rudine Sims. 2007. *Free Within Ourselves: The Development of African American Children's Literature*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Brooks, Wanda M. and McNair, Jonda C. (Eds.). 2008. *Embracing, Evaluating, and Examining African American Children's and Young Adult Literature*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press.

Johnson, Dianne. 1990. *Telling Tales: The Pedagogy and Promise of African American Literature for Youth*. NY: Greenwood Press.

\_\_\_\_\_. (Ed). 1996. *The Best of the Brownies' Book*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Sims, Rudine. 1982. *Shadow and Substance: Afro-American Experience in Contemporary Realistic Fiction*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Smith, Henrietta, (Ed.). 1999. *The Coretta Scott King Awards Book 1970-2009*. Chicago: American Library Association.

Smith, Karen Patricia. 1994. *African American Voices in Young Adult Literature: Tradition, Transition, Transformation*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press.

# THE CLASSICS...

The children's and youth librarians of the Detroit Public Library have identified these classic picture and chapter books by or about African Americans. Our librarians are always available to make recommendations of other titles for young readers. *(Not pictured: Amisha Harijan, Elizabeth Ogan, Amanda Seppala)*



Janet Batchelder

Paula Beaudoin

Maria Bryson

Lurine Carter

Tonya Durpee

Jennifer Dye

Stephanie Fazekas-Hardy



Alison Gies

Barbara Hawkins

Sianee Hawkins

Charlene Hyland

Crystal Jolly

JoAnn Mannino

Mary Masasabi



Tracy Massey

Vernadette McAllister

Karen McIntosh

Chinyere Olumba

Emily Thomson

Terri Tower-Thomson

Mary Jo Vortkamp

## PICTURE BOOKS

**Coles, Robert**

***The Story of Ruby Bridges***

Scholastic, 1995

A true story of an extraordinarily determined girl who changes history by becoming the first African American to integrate an all-white school in New Orleans in 1960.

**Freeman, Don**

***Corduroy***

Puffin Books, 1976

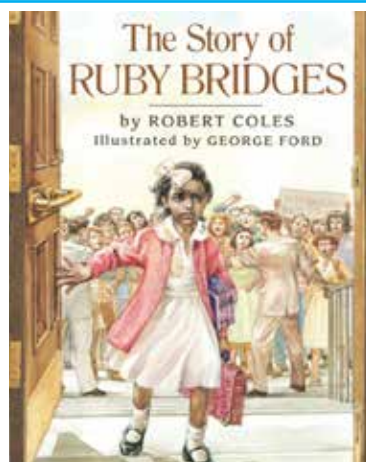
A warm-hearted story about an overlooked teddy bear and the little girl who finds him.

**Keats, Ezra Jack**

***The Snowy Day***

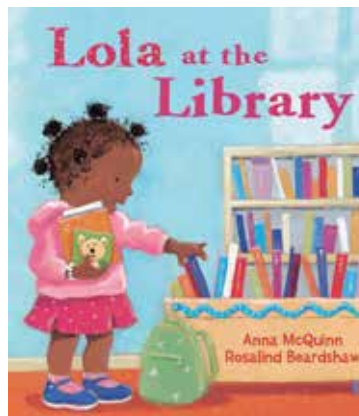
Viking Press, 1962

Peter, a curious little boy, has an adventurous winter day.



**Robert Coles**

***The Story of Ruby Bridges***



**Anna McQuinn**

***Lola at the Library***

**Levine, Ellen**

***Henry's Freedom Box***

Scholastic Press, 2007

A slave cleverly achieves independence with the help of his friends by shipping himself North in 1849.

**McQuinn, Anna**

***Lola at the Library***

Charlesbridge, 2006

A little girl experiences joy visiting the library with her mother.

**Nolan, Jerdine**

***Thunder Rose***

Silver Whistle/Harcourt Publishing, 2003

A tall tale about a brave girl who has special abilities and, when a strong storm hits, her strength is put to the ultimate test.

**Rappaport, Doreen**

***Martin's Big Words***

Hyperion Books, 2007

Despite the harsh realities of segregation, this Civil Rights icon uses language to advance the movement and achieve social justice.

**Ringgold, Faith**

***Tar Beach***

Crown Publishers, 1991

In 1939, eight-year-old Cassie dreams of flying amidst the stars of Harlem with hopes of equality for her family.

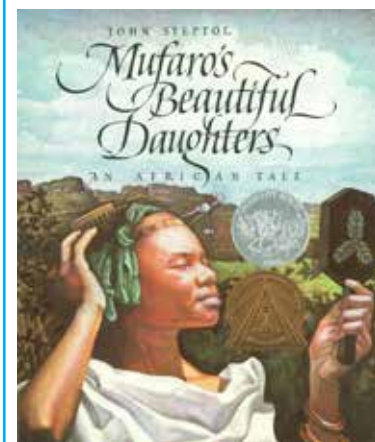
**Step toe, John**

***Mufaro's Beautiful***

***Daughters***

Harper Collins Children's Book Group, 1987

A young king seeks a wife. Nyasha, kind and considerate and Manyara, selfish and mean, journey to see the king, but only one will be chosen.



**John Steptoe**

***Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters***



## CLASSICS (con't)

**Tarpley, Natasha**

***I Love My Hair***

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 1998

Keyana, an African-American girl, celebrates pride in her heritage through her hairstyles.

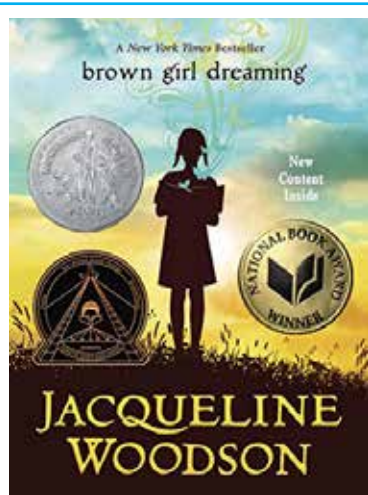
### CHAPTER BOOKS

**Curtis, Christopher Paul**

***Bud, Not Buddy***

Scholastic, 2002

During the depression era in Michigan, a ten-year-old orphan runs away and sets off on a journey to find his father using a musical memento to guide him.



**Jacqueline Woodson**  
***Brown Girl Dreaming***



**Jewell Parker Rhodes**  
***Ninth Ward***

**Curtis, Christopher Paul**

***The Watsons Go to Birmingham***

Laurel Leaf, 2000

An African American family in 1963 from Flint, Michigan, travels South and is faced with blatant racism.

**Elster, Jean Alicia**

***The Colored Car***

Wayne State University Press, 2013

How the joys of daily life and the legacy of slavery affects a twelve-year old girl and her three younger siblings in the summer of 1937 as they travel from Detroit to Tennessee to visit family.

**Flake, Sharon**

***The Skin I'm In***

Hyperion Books, 2007

Maleeka, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader, is teased by her peers because of her dark complexion. She learns to love herself with the help of her teacher who has a noticeable birthmark on her face.

**McKissack, Patricia**

***The Dark Thirty***

Yearling, 2001

A collection of ten spine chilling ghost stories rooted in African American history and oral tradition.

**Myers, Walter Dean**

***Bad Boy***

Harper Collins, 2009

The author travels back in time to Harlem in the '40s and '50s to find his roots. He uses reading as his escape to overcome the pull of the streets and becomes the writer so loved by millions.

**Rhodes, Jewell Parker**

***Ninth Ward***

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2012

Twelve-year old Lanesha lives with her clairvoyant adopted grandmother in New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina hits. Riding out the storm changes their lives forever.

**Taylor, Mildred D.**

***Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry***

Puffin Books, 2004

Set in Mississippi at the height of the depression, a family struggles to maintain their integrity, pride, dignity, independence and self-respect in the face of racism and social injustice for people of color.

**Williams-Garcia, Rita**

***One Crazy Summer***

Amistad, 2011

Chaos ensues as three young sisters travel to California to visit their estranged mother and learn a cultural history lesson taught by the Black Panthers.

**Woodson, Jacqueline**

***Brown Girl Dreaming***

Penguin Groups, 2014

A poetic account of the writer's childhood in South Carolina and in New York during the era of Jim Crow and the upsurge of the Civil Rights movement.



**The Detroit Public Library Children's and Youth Librarians**

# YOUTH BOOKS

## PICTURE BOOKS

**Chapin, Tom and Michael Mark**

***The Library Book***

Atheneum Books, 2017

A little girl goes to the library, meets all of her favorite storybook characters, and invites them home to play.

**Gianferrari, Maria**

***Hello Goodbye Dog***

Roaring Brook Press, 2017

Moose's days are long and boring when Zara goes to school for the first time, so he escapes the house and rushes to the school.

**Grimes, Nikki**

***The Watcher, Inspired by Psalm 21***

Eerdmans Books, 2017

Jordan lives in fear of Tanya, the class bully, who has worries of her own.

**McMorrow, T.E.**

***The Nutcracker in Harlem***

Harper Collins, 2017

During the Harlem Renaissance, a little girl finds her voice as a musician thanks to her enchanting adventures with a magical toy.

**Rucker, Rhonda**

***Make a Change***

Pelican, 2017

Marvin experiences discrimination at a department store's "white only" lunch counter.

**Spurr, Elizabeth**

***In the Snow***

Peachtree, 2017

A young girl experiences a blustery winter's day in the park by enjoying fun activities.

**Velasquez, Eric**

***Looking for Bongo***

Holiday House, 2017

A boy's beloved stuffed toy is missing and his family doesn't help him find it.

**Wittenstein, Barry**

***Waiting for Pumpsie***

Charlesbridge, 2017

Bernard is a young Red Sox fan troubled by the lack of black players in major league baseball.

## JUVENILE FICTION

**Allen, Crystal**

***The Magnificent Mya Tibbs: The Wall of Fame Game***

Baltzer and Bray/Harperteen, 2017

As a family prepares for a new baby, the siblings are extra excited to spend time

with their mother until they are cornered into a bet with their number one enemy.

**Butler, Dori Hillstead**

***King and Kayla and the Case of the Missing Dog Treats***

Peachtree, 2017

A little girl finds out why her peanut butter goodies are missing with the help of a misunderstood puppy.

**Cannon, Sarah**

***Oddity***

Feiwei and Friends, 2017

A tough eleven-year-old faces down zombie rabbits and alien mobs, while trying to find her missing twin.

**English, Karen**

***The New Kid: The Carver Chronicles, Book Five***

Clarion Books, 2017

A humorous story about a very diverse group of friends.

**Moore, David Barclay**

***The Stars Beneath Our Feet***

Alfred A. Knopf Books, 2017

A boy tries to steer a safe path through the projects in Harlem in the wake of his brother's death.



**Reynolds, Jason**  
***Patina***

Atheneum, Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, 2017

A newbie to the track team, a young girl must learn to rely on her teammates as she tries to outrun her personal demons.

**Vander Zee, Ruth**  
***Mississippi Morning***

Eerdmans Books, 2017

Thought provoking story set in 1933, James William's life is forever altered when he learns about racial prejudice firsthand.

**Winston, Sherri**  
***The Sweetest Sound***

Little, Brown Books, 2017

A shy ten-year-old girl grapples with an overprotective father and a mother who skipped town to pursue stardom.

## JUVENILE NON-FICTION

**Brooks, Gwendolyn**  
***We Are Shining***

Harper Collins, 2017

A poet speaks to children of the world about acceptance and unity, stressing that each child should have the opportunity to grow and hope.

**Cummings, Judy Dodge**  
***The Underground Railroad: Navigate the Journey from Slavery to Freedom with 25 Projects***

Nomad Press, 2017

The author describes 19<sup>th</sup> century network of secret routes and safe houses operated by conductors and station masters, both black and white.

**Edwards, Sue Bradford; Duchess Harris**  
***Black Lives Matter***

Core Library, 2017

Examines police shootings that fueled a movement for justice and accountability.

**Harrison, Vashti**  
***Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History***

Little, Brown Books, 2017

True stories of 40 famous American women who broke barriers to achieve their goals.

**Hartfield, Claire**  
***A Few Red Drops: The Chicago Race Riot of 1919***

Clarion Books, 2018

When five black youths swim too close to the "white" beach in Lake Michigan, violence erupts in Chicago.

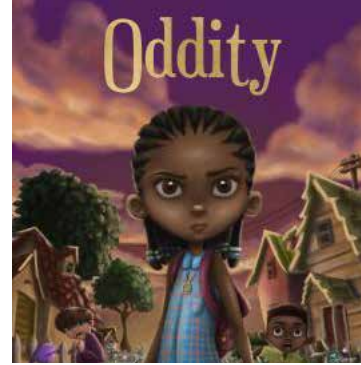
**Linde, Barbara**  
***African Americans in Political Office: From the Civil War to the White House***

Lucent Press, 2017

Barack Obama made history when he became president of the United States.

**Newsome, Joel**  
***Minority Soldiers Fighting in the Civil War***

Cavendish Square Publishing, 2017



**Sarah Cannon**  
***Oddity***

An account of Civil War soldiers who fought against racism, horrific conditions of slavery, and violence against freedmen.

**Otto, Carolyn B.**  
***Celebrate Kwanzaa***  
National Geographic Society, 2017

Describes the African American holiday celebrated throughout the U.S.

**Perkins, Useni Eugene**  
***Hey Black Child***  
Little, Brown Books, 2017  
A poem about achievement and ancestral joy within the Black experience.

**Schwartz, Heather E.**  
***Locked Up for Freedom: Civil Rights Protesters at the Leesburg Stockade***  
Millbrook Press, 2017  
In 1963 more than 30 young African American girls are arrested for taking part in a civil rights protest and confined to a Civil War Era stockade.

## YOUTH BOOKS (con't)

**Shepard, Ray Anthony**  
***Now or Never! Fifty-Fourth***  
***Massachusetts Infantry's***  
***War to End Slavery***

Calkins Creek Books, 2017  
 Chronicles the life stories of George E. Stephens and James Henry Gooding, Black soldiers who fought in the Massachusetts 54<sup>th</sup> Infantry.

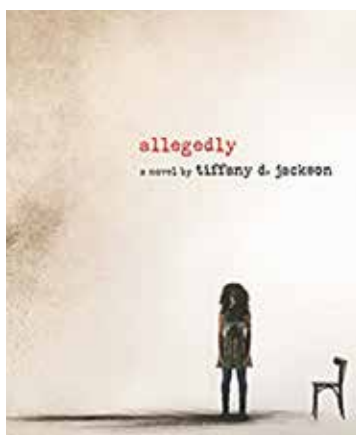
### JUVENILE BIOGRAPHY

**Asim, Jabari**  
***A Child's Introduction to***  
***African American History:***  
***The Experiences, People,***  
***and Events That Shaped***  
***Our Country***

Black Dog and Leventhal, 2018  
 A history of the roles people of color played through politics, activism, sports, medicine, music, entertainment, law, slave trade, middle passage, abolitionist movement, and the Civil War.

**Briere-Haquet, Alice**  
***Nina: Jazz Legend and Civil***  
***Rights Activist Nina Simone***

Charlesbridge, 2017  
 Jazz-music legend recounts her career, the trials she faced as an African American woman, and the stand she took during the Civil Rights Era.



Tiffany D. Jackson  
*Allegedly*

**Buckley, Jr., James**  
***Simon Biles***  
 Bearport Publishing, 2017  
 Famous gymnast wins 19 Olympic and World Championship medals becoming the most decorated American gymnast.

**Clark-Robinson, Monica**  
***Let the Children March***  
 HMH Books, 2018  
 In 1963 thousands of African American children in Birmingham, Alabama, protested against the laws that kept black people separate from white people.

**Loney, Andrea, Keith Mallett**  
***Take a Picture of Me, James***  
***Van Der Zee!***

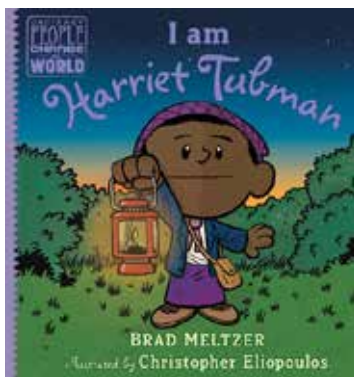
Lee & Low Books, 2017  
 Traces the life of an innovative photographer during the Harlem Renaissance.

**Medina, Nico**  
***Who is Aretha Franklin?***  
 Penguin Press, 2018  
 The famous music and cultural icon uses her powerful voice and piano skills to further her musical career.

**Meltzer, Brad**  
***I Am Harriet Tubman***  
 Dial Books, 2018  
 The story of a famous heroic woman who played a role in the fight against slavery.

**Myers, Walter Dean**  
***Frederick Douglass: The***  
***Lion Who Wrote History***  
 Harper Collins, 2017  
 Chronicles the life of a self-educated slave who became a powerful voice for freedom and justice.

**Pinkney, Andrea Davis**  
***Martin Rising: Requiem for***  
***a King***  
 Scholastic Press, 2018  
 Highlights of the final months of Dr. King's life and his impact on America's history.



**Brad Meltzer**  
*I Am Harriet Tubman*

**Rappaport, Doreen**  
*42 Is Not Just a Number: The Odyssey of Jackie Robinson, American Hero*  
Candlewick Press, 2017  
A tribute to a man who spoke out forthrightly against racial injustice in sports.

**Shetterly, Margot**  
*Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race*  
Harper Collins, 2018  
True story of four women of color who helped NASA launch men into space, despite limited opportunities for women.

**Whiting, Jim**  
*Russell Westbrook*  
Mitchell Lane, 2017  
A young athlete grows up loving the game of basketball. His hard work and determination make his dreams come true.

**Wilson, Jamia**  
*Young, Gifted, and Black: Meet 52 Black Heroes from Past and Present*  
Wide Eyed Editions, 2018  
Stories about the achievements of famous heroes, leaders and pioneers of today and yesterday.

## TEEN FICTION

**Alexander, Kwame**  
*Solo*  
Blink, 2017  
Blade, son of a famous musical family, learns to navigate life on his own terms.

**Bolden, Tony**  
*Crossing Ebenezer Creek*  
Bloomsbury USA Children's, 2017  
When Mariah and her brother are freed from slavery, they believe that the struggle is over. Hardships and brutality are around the corner.

**Hopkins, Ellen**  
*The You I've Never Known*  
Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2017  
A teenager who escapes from an abusive mother, lands in the arms of an older man who causes more complications than she could have imagined.

**Jackson, Tiffany D.**  
*Allegedly*  
Katherine Tegan Books, 2017  
A young girl is convicted of murder seeks justice while trying to survive the hardships of living in a group home.

**Mixon, Donovan**  
*Ahgotahandleonit*  
Cinco Puntos Press, 2017  
Tim, a struggling black kid on the mean streets of Newark, tries to survive after his drunken father walks out on the family.

**Reynolds, Jason**  
*All American Boys*  
Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, 2017  
Two boys, one black, one white, suffer the repercussions of violence at school that leaves their community facing racial tensions.

**Reynolds, Jason**  
*The Long Way Down*  
Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, 2017  
Will considers getting revenge for his brother's death on the elevator ride to the lobby.

**Rodman, Sean**  
*Firewall*  
Orca Books Publishers, 2017  
Josh is a gamer who moves with his family from Chicago to a small town where he knows no one.

**Shabazz, Ilyasah, Renée Watson**  
*Betty Before X*  
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2018  
A story of a little girl who gains confidence and purpose as she is inspired by the speeches of Paul Robeson, Thurgood Marshall and others.



## YOUTH BOOKS (con't)

**Shabazz, Ilyasah, Kekla  
Magoon**

***X: A Novel***

Candlewick Press, 2016  
Malcolm is convinced that he can be anything that he wants to be until his father is murdered and his mother is taken away. 2017-2018 Great Michigan Read title.

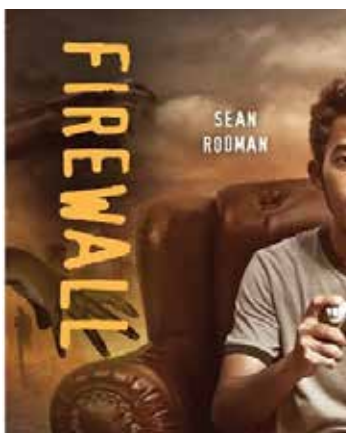
**Stone, Nic  
Dear Martin**

Crown Books, 2017  
A teen debate team captain and Ivy League candidate is stopped and handcuffed by neighborhood police and it changes his outlook on life.

**Thomas, Angie  
The Hate U Give**

Balzar and Bray, 2017  
Starr lives with the reality of witnessing a lifelong friend being killed by the police. A #1 New York Times Bestseller.

**Walter, Jon  
My Name Is Not Friday**  
David Fickling Books, 2017  
Well-mannered brothers, one good, one bad, but inseparable, are living in an orphanage during the Civil War Era.



**Sean Rodman  
Firewall**

**Zoboi, Ibi  
American Street**

Balzer and Bray, 2017  
A Haitian high school student learns to navigate the streets of Detroit. A National Book Award Finalist.

### TEEN NON-FICTION

**Bolden, Tonya  
Pathfinders: The Journeys  
of 16 Extraordinary  
Black Souls**

Abrams Books, 2017  
Describes Black achievements in America against the odds.

**Brimner, Larry Dane  
Twelve Days in May:  
Freedom 1961**

Calkins Creek Books, 2017  
Twelve history-making days in May 1961, thirteen black and white civil rights activists known as the "Freedom Riders," traveled to the South to draw attention to unconstitutional segregation.

**Griffiths, Katie  
Beyoncé: Entertainment  
Industry Icon**

Cavendish Square Publishing, 2017  
How the reigning queen of the music industry has left an indelible mark on the entertainment business.

**Leland, Melvin  
Chasing Space: An  
Astronaut's Story of Grit,  
Grace, and Second Chances**

Amistad Press, 2017  
Former NASA astronaut and former NFL football wide receiver shares his personal journey from the gridiron to the stars.

# BEST OF 2017



*The Library Book*  
Tom Chapin and Michael Mark



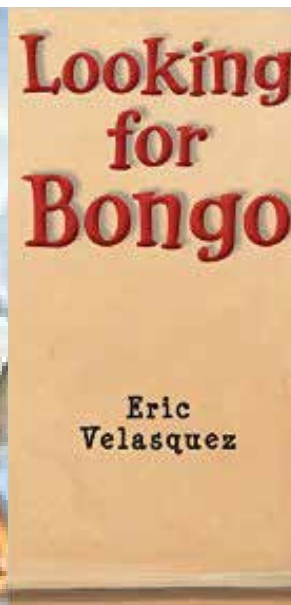
*Hello Goodbye Dog*  
Maria Gianferrari



*The Nutcracker in Harlem*  
TE McMorrow



*In the Snow*  
Elizabeth Spurr



*Looking for Bongo*  
Eric Velasquez



*Solo*  
Kwame Alexander



*The Long Way Down*  
Jason Reynolds



*X: A Novel*  
Ilyasah Shabazz and Kekla Magoon



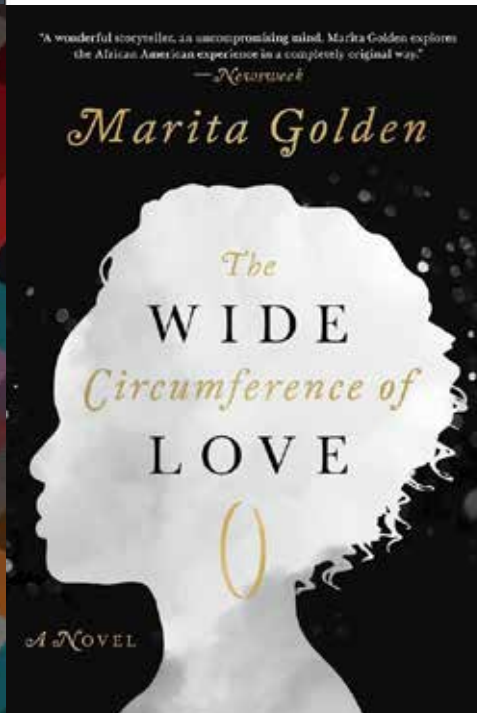
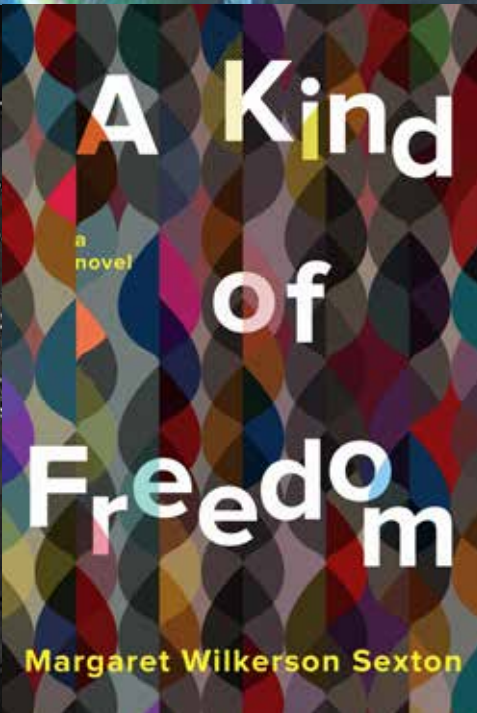
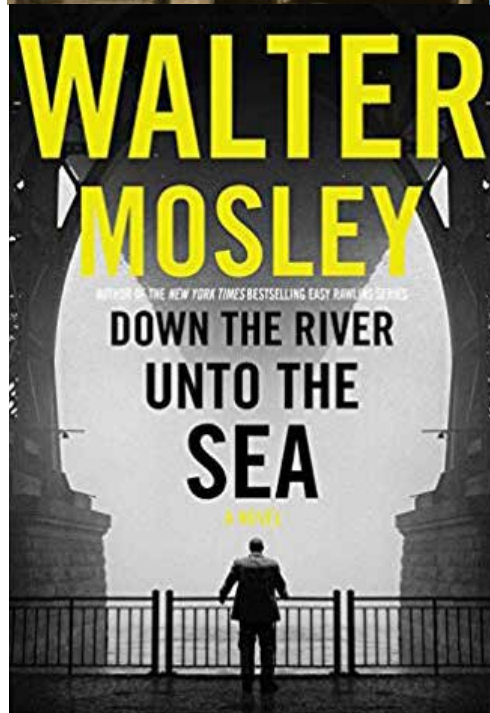
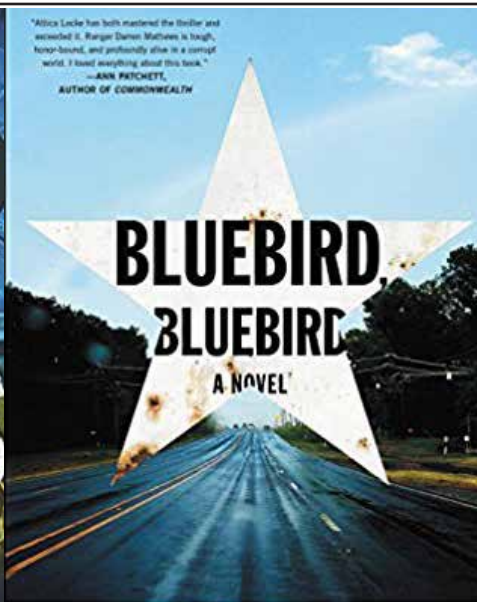
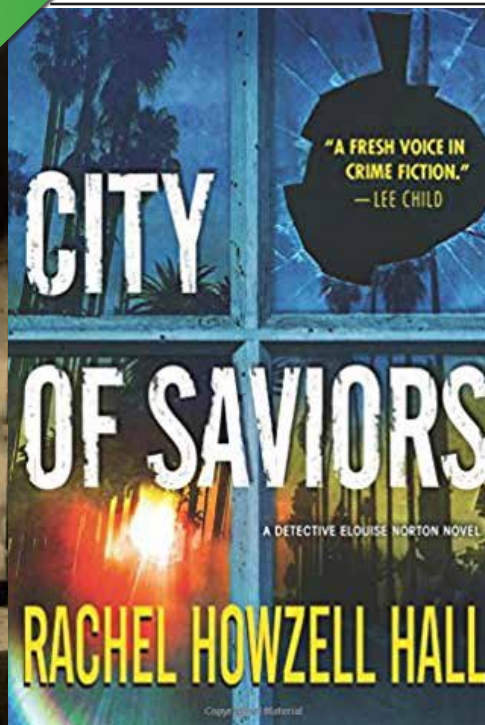
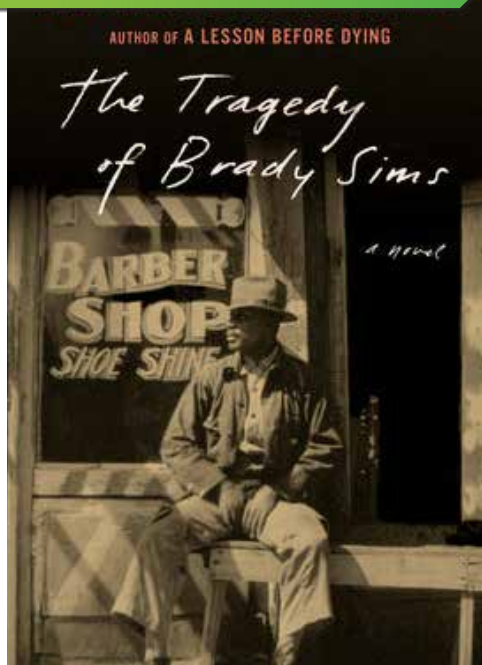
*Dear Martin*  
Nic Stone



*The Hate U Give*  
Angie Thomas



## BEST OF FICTION



**Gaines, Ernest J.**  
*Tragedy of Brady Sims*

**Golden, Marita**  
*The Wide Circumference of Love*

**Hall, Rachel Howzell**  
*City of Saviors*

**Locke, Attica**  
*Bluebird, Bluebird*

**Mosley, Walter**  
*Down the River Unto the Sea*

**Sexton, Margaret Wilkerson**  
*A Kind of Freedom*

**Alers, Rochelle**  
*Breakfast in Bed*  
Dafina Books, 2017

After being downsized out of her job in New York City, Tonya moves to New Orleans and begins to make her own dreams come true.

**Alers, Rochelle**  
*The Inheritance*  
Dafina Books, 2017  
After a layoff Hannah finds herself back in Louisiana facing new challenges and dealing with old heartbreak.

**Antoinette, Ashley**  
*The Prada Plan 5*  
St. Martin's Press, 2017  
Disaya must change her plan

after discovering that riches can't buy her true happiness.

**Ashley & JaQuavis**  
*The Cartel 7: Illuminati Roundtable of Bosses*  
St. Martin's Griffin, 2017  
Drug kingpin is forced to rebuild his empire.

**Awsum, Joe; Wahida Clark**  
*Along Came a Savage*  
Wahida Clark Presents Publishing, LLC, 2018  
One visit home to see friends and family leads to lust, jealousy, and danger.

**Billingsley, ReShonda Tate**  
*Seeking Sarah*  
Simon and Schuster, 2017  
When Brooke's father dies, secrets are revealed and vengeance is sought.

**Bunn, Curtis**  
*Welcome to My World: A Novel*  
Strebtor Books, 2017  
Brenda Harris is on a downward spiral in her professional and personal life until she encounters a homeless man who encourages and uplifts her spirit.

**Clemmons, Zinzi**  
*What We Lose*  
Viking, 2017  
A young woman deals with life in the United States as a bi-racial South African immigrant.

**Coster, Namia**  
*Halsey Street*  
Little A, 2018

An artist moves back to her old and now gentrified Bed-Stuy neighborhood to take care of her aging father.

**Ellis, Shelly**  
*To Love & Betray*  
Dafina/Kensington, 2017  
The Murdoch family is on the verge of being overwhelmed by their personal and business drama.

**Everett, Percival**  
*So Much Blue*  
Graywolf Press, 2017  
An artist's latest painting reflects his secrets and past regrets.

**Gaines, Ernest J.**  
*Tragedy of Brady Sims*  
Penguin House, 2017  
A father takes drastic measures to keep his son out of prison.

**Garrett, Kellye**  
*Hollywood Homicide: A Detective by Day Mystery*  
Midnight Ink Books, 2017  
Struggling actress, Dayna Anderson investigates the murder of a hit-and-run victim.

**Golden, Marita**  
*The Wide Circumference of Love*  
Arcade Publishing, 2017  
A family deals with changes and challenges when the patriarch is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.



**Hall, Rachel Howzell**

***City of Saviors***

Tom Doherty Associates, 2017  
Newly divorced and suffering from PTSD, Detective Elouise “Lou” Norton must confront a devil disguised as a saint.

**Hambly, Barbara**

***Murder in July: Historical Mystery Set in New Orleans***

Severn House Publishers, 2017  
January is drawn into a murder investigation that ultimately threatens the lives of his family.

**Hampton, Brenda**

***Trouble in the White House: A Black President Novel***

Urban Books, 2017  
Mayhem and destruction enter the White House after President Stephen C. Jefferson realizes that his estranged son is classified as a dangerous terrorist.

**Hill, Donna**

***A House Divided***

Dafina/Kensington, 2017  
A young journalist has to choose between her love of the truth or family secrets.

**Hubbard, Ladée**

***The Talented Ribkins***

Melville House, 2017  
A man with unique talents has one week to return money he has stolen from the mob.

**Jackson, K. M.**

***The Betting Vow***

Dafia, 2017  
A supermodel wants to transition into acting, so she accepts a bet with a producer who promises to help her if she wins.

**Jenkins, Beverly**

***Chasing Down a Dream (Blessings #8)***

William Morrow & Company, 2017  
The residents of Henry Adams once again embrace challenges that strengthen their community.

**Jenkins, Beverly**

***Tempest***

Avon, 2018  
Spitfire mail order bride awakens a new passion for life in her new family.

**Kelly, Simone**

***Like a Fly on the Wall***

William Morrow, 2017  
Psychic abilities lead to love and intrigue.

**Kwan**

***Hoodlum: The Good Son***

Write 2 Eat Concepts, 2017  
A college basketball player takes over his father’s crime empire.

**Lazarre-White, Khary**

***Passage***

Seven Stories Press, 2017  
A young man navigates the cold city streets to escape human and supernatural forces.

**Locke, Attica**

***Bluebird, Bluebird***

Mulholland Books, 2017  
Forced to return to his home town, Texas Ranger Mathews must solve two racially charged murders.



**Beverly Jenkins**  
***Tempest***

**Mason, J.D.**

***Seducing Abby Rhodes: A Novel***

St. Martin's Press, 2017

A love story with a paranormal twist and a bitter ex-girlfriend.

**Moore, Edward Kelsey**

***The Supremes Sing the Happy Heartache Blues***

Henry Holt and Company, 2017

Life-long friends deal with aging parents and relationship challenges.

**Mosley, Walter**

***Down the River Unto the Sea***

Mulholland Books, 2018

One of NYPD's finest, Joe King Oliver, is framed for assault and searches to find the true culprit.

**Osborne, Karen E.**

***Getting It Right***

Akashic Books, 2017

A dying man asks his daughter to find her half-sister who was brought up in foster care.

**Scott, Sophronia**

***Unforgivable Love***

William Morrow, 2017

A retelling of the 18<sup>th</sup> century classic *Dangerous Liaisons*, set in 1940's Harlem.



**Jesmyn Ward**

***Sing, Unburied, Sing***

**Sexton, Margaret Wilkerson**

***A Kind of Freedom***

Counterpoint, 2017

Story depicts a family's hopes and struggles, spanning three generations in New Orleans.

**Sherrod, Leslie J**

***The Man of My Schemes***

Brown Girls Books, 2017

Societal pressures lead to disastrous consequences and God's grace.

**Snipes, Wesley; Ray Norman**

***Talon of God: A Novel***

Harper Voyager, 2017

A young doctor is drawn into a battle to save humanity.

**Santiago, Nisa**

***Mafioso: Part One***

Melodrama Publishing, 2017

A married couple uses their six children to build a crime empire.

**Stratton, Shelly**

***Between Lost and Found***

Kensington Publishing, 2017

Life is perfect for Janelle until her beloved grandfather goes missing.

**Umrigar, Thrity**

***Everybody's Son: A Novel***

HarperCollins, 2017

A man discovers his adoption by a wealthy white family is enmeshed in secrets and deceit.

**Ward, Jesmyn**

***Sing, Unburied, Sing***

Scribner, 2017

Lyrical journey of one family's struggle with violence, drug abuse and family ties.

**Watts, Stephanie Powell**

***No One is Coming to Save Us: A Novel***

HarperCollins, 2017

A successful business man returns to his hometown to woo his married childhood sweetheart.

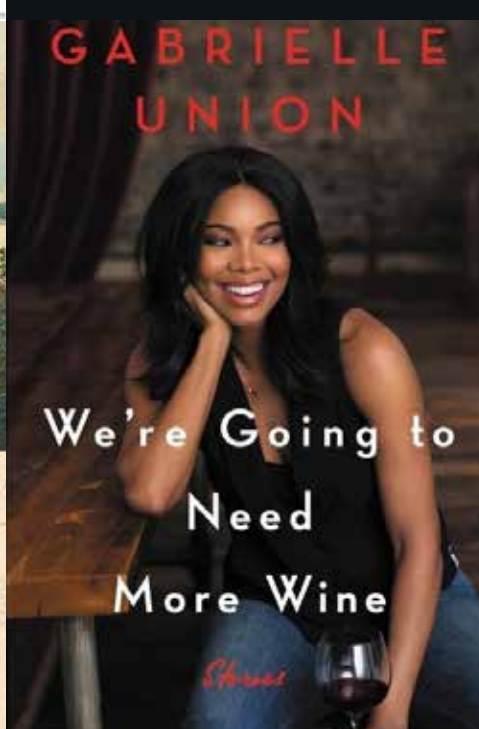
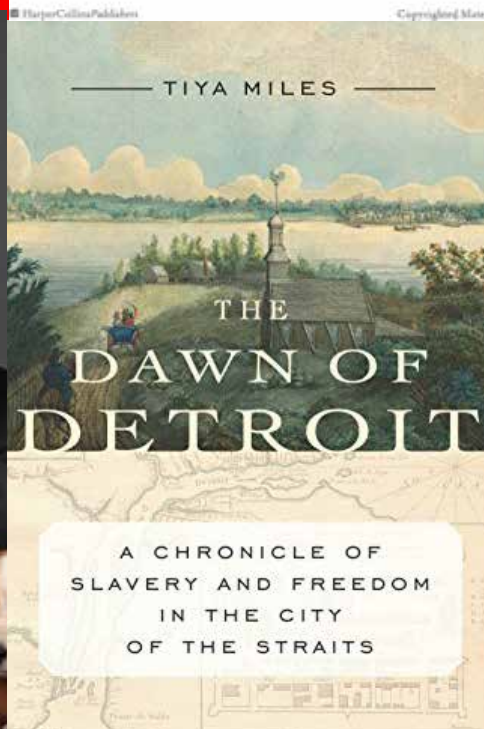
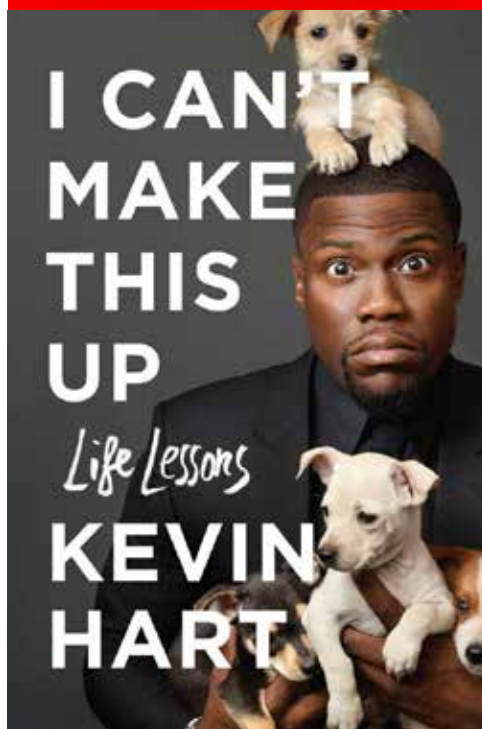
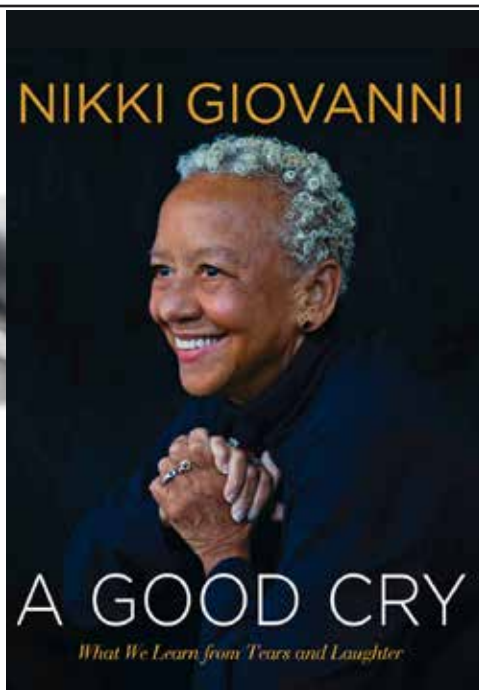
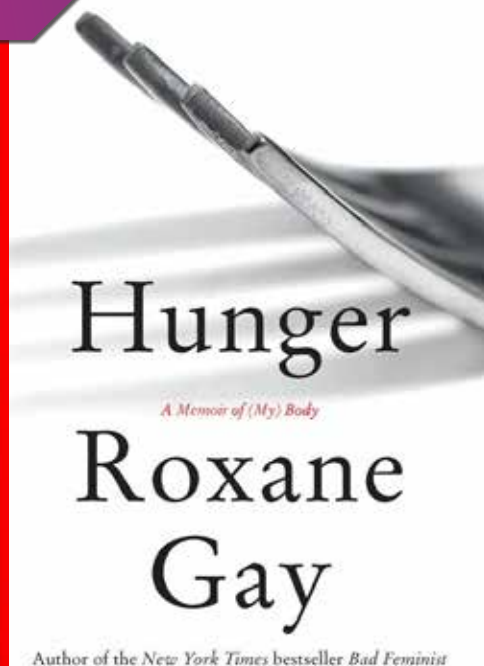
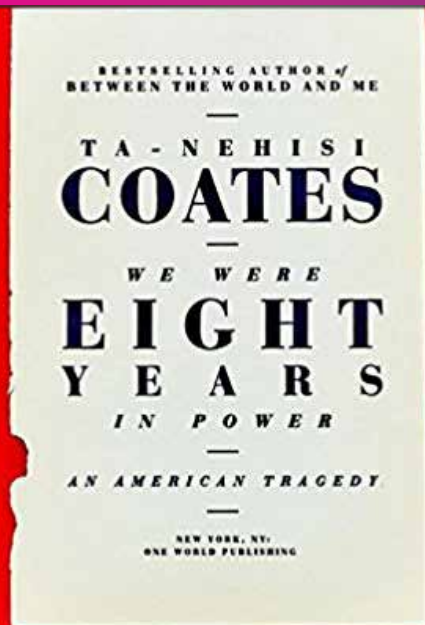
**Weber, Carl**

***Grand Opening 2: A Family Business Novel***

Kensington, 2017

The murder of the beloved matriarch causes a split in the grief stricken family.

## BEST OF NON-FICTION



Coates, Ta-Nehisi  
*We Were Eight Years  
in Power: An American  
Tragedy*

Gay, Roxane  
*Hunger*

Giovanni, Nikki  
*A Good Cry: What We Learn  
From Tears and Laughter*

Hart, Kevin; Neil Strauss  
*I Can't Make This Up: Life  
Lessons*

Miles, Tiya  
*The Dawn of Detroit: A  
Chronicle of Slavery and  
Freedom in the City of the  
Straits*

Union, Gabrielle  
*We're Going to Need More  
Wine: Stories That Are  
Funny, Complicated and  
True*

## NON-FICTION

### ART, MUSIC, AND POETRY

Dungy, Camille T.  
*Guidebook to Relative  
Strangers: Journeys Into  
Race, Motherhood, and  
History*

W. W. Norton & Company,  
2017

Poetry collection explores  
the impact outside influences  
have on the world around her.

Giovanni, Nikki  
*A Good Cry: What We Learn  
From Tears and Laughter*  
William Morrow & Company,  
2017

Intimate and personal, Nikki  
Giovanni exposes her life  
and heart through poetry and  
kitchen table laughter.

Hayes, Elaine M.  
*Queen of Bebop: The  
Musical Lives of Sarah  
Vaughan*

Ecco, 2018

Chronicles the legendary  
singer's music career and her  
influences on other artists and  
social justice issues.

Jackson, Angela  
*A Surprise Queenhood in  
the New Black Sun: The  
Life & Legacy of Gwendolyn  
Brooks*

Beacon Press, 2017

A collection of poems and  
portraits that depict the life of  
Gwendolyn Brooks.

Lucidon, Amanda  
*Chasing Light: Michelle  
Obama Through the  
Lens of a White House  
Photographer*

Ten Speed Press, 2018

Candid photos celebrate one  
of the most admired First  
Ladies in history.

Robbins, Hollis; Henry  
Louis Gates, Jr., Editors  
*The Portable Nineteenth-  
Century African American  
Women Writers*

Penguin Classics, 2017

Essays address social,  
political and artistic feminist  
thought throughout America's  
Civil War and Reconstruction  
eras.

Za'hid, Zaid  
*The Black Notes: Fresh  
Writing by Black Women  
and Girls*

Insomniac Press, 2017

Stories and poems written  
from various cultural  
and multi-generational  
perspectives.

### BIOGRAPHY/MEMOIRS

Allen, Danielle  
*Cuz: The Life and Times of  
Michael A.*

Liveright Publishing  
Corporation, 2017

After serving over 15 years in  
prison, Michael turns his life  
around for the better only to  
be murdered three years later.

Archer, Dennis W.  
*Let the Future Begin*

Atkins & Greenspan Writing,  
2017

Inspiring story of a rise from  
humble beginnings to multiple  
career and family triumphs,  
including Mayor of the City of  
Detroit.



## NON-FICTION (con't)

**Bell, W. Kamau**

***The Awkward Thoughts of W. Kamau Bell: Tales of a 6'4", African American, Heterosexual, Cisgender, Left-Leaning, Asthmatic, Black and Proud Blerd, Mama's Boy, Dad, and Stand-Up Comedian***

Dutton, 2017

Comic and political commentator offers both a biography and a discourse on "The Isms" that often polarize and confound us.

**Burton, Susan:**

**Cari Lynn**

***Becoming Ms. Burton: From Prison to Recovery to Leading the Fight for Incarcerated Women***

The New Press, 2017

After the sudden tragic death of her son, a woman falls into a cycle of drugs and prison. After finding her own path to recovery, she starts a program to help other women.

**Charlamagne Tha God**

***Black Privilege: Opportunity Comes To Those Who Create It***

Touchstone Books, 2017

Popular radio host shares his journey to success despite having a troubled early life.

**Eason, Rhonda**

***To Hair and Back: My Journey Toward Self Love One Strand at a Time: A Memoir***

Rhonda Eason, 2017

Author explores her evolution from hair hate to self-love.

**Fields, Kim; Todd Gold**

***Blessed Life: My Surprising Journey of Joy, Tears, and Tales from Harlem to Hollywood***

Faithwords, 2017

From *The Facts of Life* to *Living Single*, Kim Fields unveils the real facts about her life's journey.

**Gay, Roxane**

***Hunger***

Harper, 2018

A series of essays presents a deeply personal examination of how struggles with weight, food and body image impacted the author's life.

**Haddish, Tiffany**

***The Last Black Unicorn***

Simon & Schuster, 2017

Groundbreaking comedian tells her story of a rough upbringing, including cycling through foster care and how she found solace in comedy.

**Harris, Jessica B.**

***My Soul Looks Back: A Memoir***

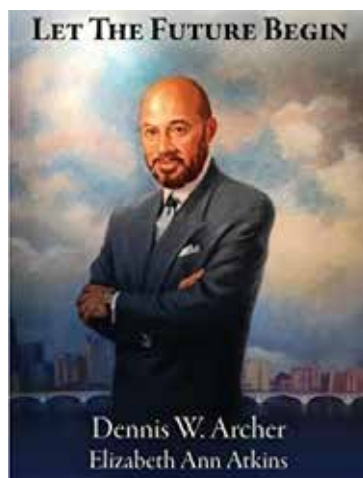
Scribner Book Company, 2017  
Culinary historian and author shares candid stories about her life and circle of friends.

**Hart, Kevin; Neil Strauss**

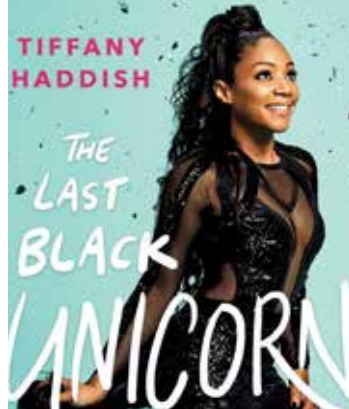
***I Can't Make This Up: Life Lessons***

Atria/37Ink, 2017

One of the world's most popular comedian's shares stories about his life and gives advice about how to be successful.



**Dennis W. Archer**  
***Let the Future Begin***



**Tiffany Haddish**  
***The Last Black Unicorn***

**Irby, Samantha**  
***We Are Never Meeting in Real Life***

Vintage Books, 2017  
Blogger and essayist uses humor and wit to chronicle her life as a black, full-figured woman in today's society.

**Jackson, Lawrence P.**  
***Chester B. Himes: A Biography***

W.W. Norton & Company, 2017  
Archival material and extensive interviews with his contemporaries provide a look into the life of often overlooked Harlem Renaissance and noir crime fiction writer.

**Khan-Cullors, Patrisse**  
***When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir***

St. Martin's Press, 2018  
Author reveals how she was inspired to seek justice for those who could not fight for themselves.

**Lewis, Jenifer**  
***The Mother of Black Hollywood: A Memoir***

Amistad Press, 2017  
Everyone's favorite mom gives an honest and uplifting account of her life and 40-year career.

**Mane, Gucci**  
***The Autobiography of Gucci Mane***

Simon & Schuster, 2017  
Rapper and reality television star reveals how he learned from his mistakes and changed his life.

**Union, Gabrielle**  
***We're Going to Need More Wine: Stories That Are Funny, Complicated and True***

Dey Street Books, 2017  
Actress and activist chronicles her life through laughter, strength and pain.

**Williams, Patricia; Jeannine Amber**  
***Rabbit: The Autobiography of Ms. Pat***

Dey Street Books, 2017  
Comedian reveals how growing up in poverty with an alcoholic mother during the crack epidemic shaped her life.

## BUSINESS, FINANCE AND PROFESSIONAL

**Alleyne, Paul**  
***How to Become a Millionaire: If a Black Guy Can Do It, So Can You!***

Wmlb Publishing, 2017  
Millionaire reveals his unconventional secrets to success.

**Baradaran, Mehrsa**  
***The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap***

Harvard University Press, 2017  
Author draws a compelling parallel between the banking industry and racial injustice.

**Bryant, John Hope**  
***The Memo: Five Rules for Your Economic Liberation***

Berrett-Koehler, 2017  
Entrepreneur shares his strategies to creating wealth.

**Jakes, T.D.**  
***Soar!: Build Your Vision from the Ground Up***

FaithWords, 2018  
Combines practical business advice with inspiration and encouragement for new entrepreneurs.

## NON-FICTION (con't)

**Wills, Shomari**

***Black Fortunes: The Story of the First Six African Americans Who Escaped Slavery and Became Millionaires***

Amistad, 2018

Details the story of former slaves who overcame insurmountable odds to build financial success.

### COOKING

**Ali, Laila**

***Food for Life: Delicious & Healthy Comfort Food from My Table to Yours!***

St. Martin's Press, 2018

Boxing champ shares how simple it is to incorporate healthy recipes into a busy lifestyle.

**Claiborne, Jenne**

***Sweet Potato Soul: 100 Easy Vegan Recipes for the Southern Flavors of Smoke, Sugar, Spice, and Soul***

Harmony, 2018

Chef brings a touch of southern soul to plant-based cooking.

**LaBelle, Patti**

***Desserts LaBelle: Soulful Sweets to Sing About***

Grand Central Life & Style, 2017  
Memories, tips, tricks and techniques are highlights of the latest offering from singer and phenomenal home cook.

**Mowry, Tia**

***Whole New You: How Real Food Transforms Your Life, for a Healthier, More Gorgeous You***

Ballantine Books, 2017

Actress shares how she was able to heal her body by changing her eating habits.

**Ross, Milan**

***The Change Cookbook: Using the Power of Food to Transform Your Body, Your Health and Your Life***

Square One, 2017

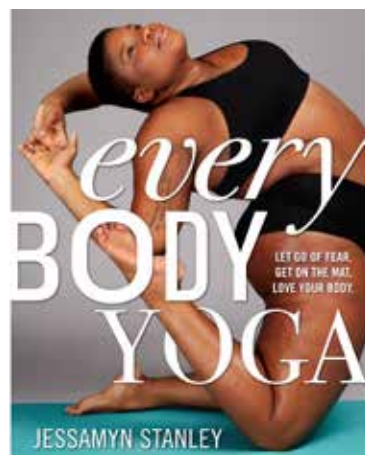
Social media influencer shows how healthy eating can be life changing.

**Twitty, Michael**

***The Cooking Gene: A Journey Through African American Culinary History in the Old South***

Amistad Press, 2017

Food historian revisits the Antebellum south to trace the origins of his family and traditional recipes.



**Jessamyn Stanley**

***Every Body Yoga: Let Go of Fear, Get on the Mat, Love Your Body***

### HEALTH AND SCIENCE

**Chestnut, Morris;**

**Obi Obadike**

***The Cut: Lose Up to 10 pounds in 10 Days and Sculpt Your Best Body***

Grand Central Life Style, 2017

Detailed diet and fitness program, with exercises that can be done at home or in the gym.

**Grubbs, M.D., Vanessa**

***Hundreds of Interlaced Fingers: A Kidney Doctor's Search for the Perfect Match***

Amistad, 2017

Remarkable story of how a doctor's motivation and a woman's love transformed two lives.

**Smith, Ian K.**

***Blast the Sugar Out: Lower Blood Sugar, Lose Weight, Live Better***

St. Martin's Press, 2017

Drop pounds and eliminate unwanted carbohydrates using this five-week plan.

**Stanley, Jessamyn**

***Every Body Yoga: Let Go of Fear, Get on the Mat, Love Your Body***

Workman Publishing Company, 2017

Author details how she overcame her lack of confidence and found her passion.

## HISTORY

**Coates, Ta-Nehisi**

***We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy***

One World Press, 2017

Series of essays and observations on the Obama presidency.

**Gates, Jr., Henry Louis**

***100 Amazing Facts About the Negro***

Pantheon, 2017

Famed historian uses updated research to highlight African American achievements

**Gregory, Dick**

***Defining Moments in Black History: Reading Between the Lies***

Amistad Press, 2017

Late Civil Rights activist and social critic takes a side-splitting approach to highlight key moments in America's history.

**Jacobson, Sid; Ernie Colon**  
***Three-Fifths a Man: A Graphic History of the African American Experience***

Hill & Wang, 2018

Highlighted events of African American history from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the Obama presidency and beyond.

**Miles, Tiya**

***The Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of the Straits***

The New Press, 2017

Often thought of as a Southern problem, insightful research uncovers a history of slavery in Detroit.

## INSPIRATIONAL/ RELIGION

**Mackey, Carol M.**

***Faces of Praise!: Photos and Gospel Inspirations to Encourage and Uplift***

Faithwords, 2017

Sixty colorful images of top contemporary gospel artists leading worship performances.

**Perry, Tyler**

***Higher is Waiting***

Spiegel & Grau, 2017

Perry describes how his relationship with God lead to his ultimate success as a writer, actor, filmmaker, entrepreneur and philanthropist.

**Smiley, Rickey**

***Stand by Your Truth: And Then Run for Your Life!***

Gallery Books, 2018

Multifaceted comedian shares his unique view on a variety of topics.

**T, Shaun**

***T Is for Transformation: Unleash the 7 Superpowers to Help You Dig Deeper, Feel Stronger, and Live Your Best Life***

Rodale Books, 2017

Popular fitness expert offers motivation to conquer mental obstacles that feed bad habits.

**Thomas, Latham**

***Own Your Glow: A Soulful Guide to Luminous Living and Crowning the Queen Within***

Hay House, Inc., 2017

Wellness and lifestyle guru provides principles for overcoming challenges and developing spiritual fitness.



## NON-FICTION (con't)

**Winfrey, Oprah**  
***The Wisdom of Sundays: Life-Changing Insights from Super Soul Conversations***  
 Flatiron Books, 2017  
 Religious quotes and colorful reflections of Oprah's spiritual journey.

### RELATIONSHIPS

**hooks, bell and Stuart Hall**  
***Uncut Funk: A Contemplative Dialogue***  
 Routledge, 2017  
 Honest conversations about love, life, death and sex from male and female perspectives.

**Menakem, Resmaa**  
***My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies***  
 Central Recovery Press, 2017  
 Therapist discusses the emotional toll of racism in day-to-day life.

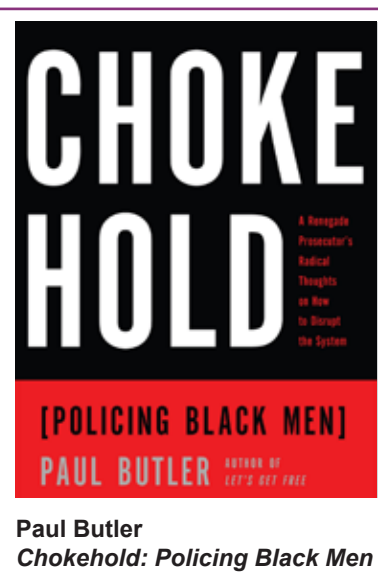
**Moore, Jr., Willie**  
***Happily After All: How to Keep Your Relationship Going When You Are Tired of Trying***  
 Wilfo Publishing, 2017  
 Marriage and relationship advice from popular gospel radio personality.

**Tolan, Robbie**  
***No Justice: One White Police Officer, One Black Family, and How One Bullet Ripped Us Apart***  
 Center Street, 2018  
 Compelling story of police brutality, the legal system that devastated the author, and how he fought back.

### SOCIAL JUSTICE

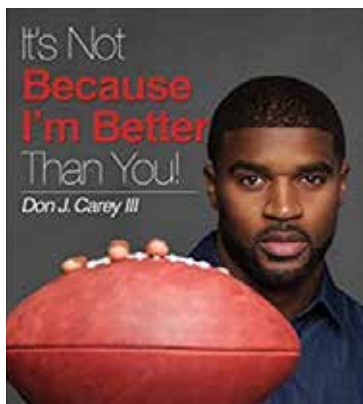
**Abu-Jamal, Mumia**  
***Have Black Lives Ever Mattered?***  
 City Lights Books, 2017  
 Author describes how the criminal justice system is responsible for the increasing number of incarcerated African American males.

**Brooks, Kinitra D.**  
***Searching for Sycorax: Black Women's Hauntings of Contemporary Horror***  
 Rutgers University Press, 2017  
 Examines the roles that African American women play in horror films.



**Butler, Paul**  
***Chokehold: Policing Black Men***  
 New Press, 2017  
 Discloses the truth behind the criminal justice system and why black men are painted as criminals and thugs.

**Davis, Angela J.**  
***Policing the Black Man: Arrest, Prosecution, and Imprisonment***  
 Pantheon Books, 2017  
 Explains how the American criminal justice system has historically demonized black men.



**Don J. Carey**  
***It's Not Because I'm Better Than You***

**Hattery, Angela; Earl Smith**  
***Policing Black Bodies: How Black Lives Are Surveilled and How to Work for Change***

Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017  
Authors scrutinize critical issues surrounding African Americans in the criminal justice system.

**Logan, Alton**  
***Justice Failed: How "Legal Ethics" Kept Me in Prison for 26 Years***

Counterpoint, 2018  
Incredulous account of how the gap between common sense and rigid ethics wrongfully imprisoned the author.

**Morrison, Toni; Ta-Nehisi Coates**

***The Origin of Others***  
Harvard University Press, 2017

Series of essays examine the dehumanization of African Americans from past to present.

**Ritchie, Andrea**

***Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women and Women of Color***  
Beacon Press, 2017

Examines racially based police brutality and criminalization against women in the United States.

**Riley, Jason L.; John McWhorter; Glenn C. Loury**  
***False Black Power?***

Templeton Press, 2017  
Authors argue that economic empowerment, not illusions of political clout, bring about equality.

## SPORTS AND RECREATION

**Blake, James**  
***Ways of Grace: Stories of Activism, Adversity, and How Sports Can Bring Us Together***

Amistad Press, 2017  
Recounts the stories of various sports and public figures who have confronted injustices.

**Demas, Lane**

***Game of Privilege: An African American History of Golf***

University of North Carolina Press, 2017

Stories of black golfers explore how race and class kept many from pursuing the sport.

**Carey, Don J.**

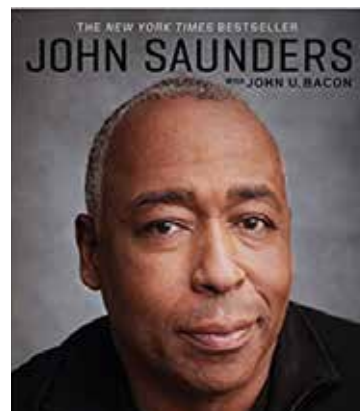
***It's Not Because I'm Better Than You***

Waldorf, 2017  
Author shares how success does not always equate to being the smartest or most talented.

**Saunders, John**

***Playing Hurt: My Journey from Despair to Hope***

Da Capo Press, 2017  
A frank and honest discussion about the late author's struggle with mental illness.



**John Saunders**  
***Playing Hurt: My Journey from Despair to Hope***

## THE MISSION

The Detroit Public Library enlightens and empowers people by providing diverse and dynamic pathways to literacy and learning.

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PUBLIC LIBRARY

# 2018 CALENDAR

## January

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

## February

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

## March

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## April

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

## May

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

## June

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

## July

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

## August

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

## September

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

## October

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

## November

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

## December

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



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Detroit, MI 48221  
313.481.1840

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