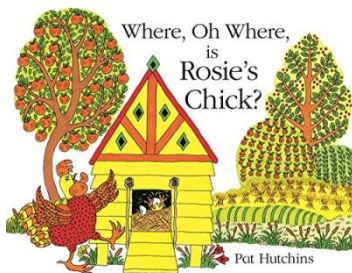


Staff Picks 2015

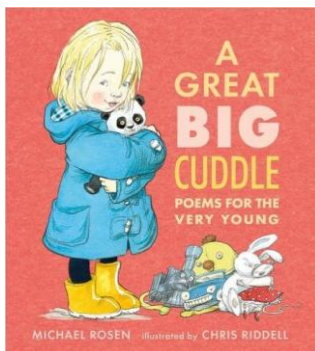
CLPE staff and their children recommend their best children's books in 2017.

Anjali



Where, Oh Where, is Rosie's Chick? by Pat Hutchins
Hodder 9781444918281

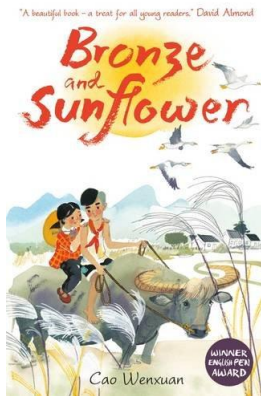
Rosie has lost her baby chick. She looks under the hen house. She looks behind the wheelbarrow. But, uh-oh, little baby chick isn't there. Over forty years after Pat Hutchins stunned us with her debut picturebook, *Rosie's Walk*, she has delighted us with this sequel. As she takes Rosie on another calamitous walk in search of her chick, young children are drawn into the unspoken dramas unfolding in the illustrations. Rosie quite literally upsets the applecart in her search, each disaster unwittingly averting danger for her hapless chick. The slapstick comedy reaches a satisfying peak, inviting children to shout "BEHIND YOU!" in true pantomime style, along with the mother hens. Meanwhile, mother fox and her cub continue to lie in wait. What next for Rosie and her chick as they set out on their walk? If you don't want to wait another forty years, only you can decide...



A Great Big Cuddle - Poems for the Very Young by Michael Rosen and illustrated by Chris Riddell Walker 9781406343199

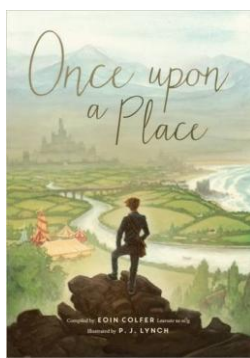
This vivid collection of poems, brought to us by two of our much loved Children's Laureates, speaks of the world of the very, very young. From the confusion expressed in 'Lost' to the joyous fun with language, it is boundless in its appeal to the young and to those of us that wish to keep tight hold of our own childhood memories. The rhythm and pace of the poetry makes for memorable reading aloud and the rich wordplay renders my two children incapable, falling into fits of giggles, swirling and chewing the delicious words as they try them out for themselves. The presentation of the text and Chris Riddell's illustrations are simply extraordinary in their intuition, providing yet more hilarity and depth of feeling, bringing to life the physicality and mood individual to each of the poems. Rosen and Riddell are an astonishing partnership and in this they have created a classic. It is a book full of surprises, sheer enjoyment and, at times, quiet tenderness. No doubt it will endear itself to the very young and the young at heart for years to come.

Ann



Bronze and Sunflower by Cao Wenxuan, translated by Helen Wang, illustrated by Meilo So
Walker 9781406348460

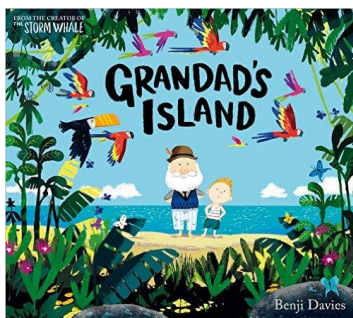
Finding a children's book translated from Chinese into English is a rare occurrence so it was fascinating to read this novel about Sunflower, taken in by one of the poorest families in the rural community where she lives when her father disappears. Bronze, who is mute, becomes a true brother for her and the story revolves around the bond between them. It's set almost fifty years ago at the time of the Cultural Revolution. It would be great to have access to children's literature which accurately reflects life in modern China too.



Once upon a Place compiled by Eoin Colfer, illustrated by P J Lynch
Little Island 9781910411377

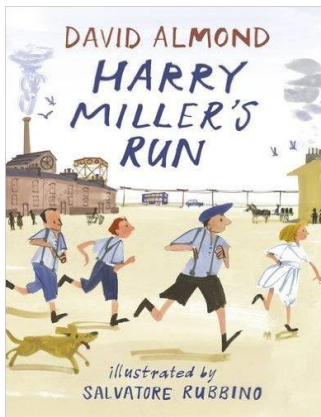
A diverse and imaginative collection of short stories and poems, compiled by the current Irish Children's Laureate, takes readers on a journey around Ireland conducted by some of the country's best modern children's authors. There is a great range of subject matter and style: childhood memories, humour, horror and, in several stories, a convincing mix of fantasy and reality. The book is beautifully produced and P J Lynch's charcoal drawings play no small part in its overall appeal.

Charlotte



Grandad's Island by Benji Davies
Simon & Schuster 9781471119958

A beautifully touching story portraying the unique and special relationship between Syd and his Grandad, who journey through beautiful landscapes lavishly represented by Benji Davies in his rich illustrations. As in *The Storm Whale* and in the illustrations to Linda Sarah's *On Sudden Hill*, Davies deals with poignant and emotional issues with great depth and sensitivity through the eyes of endearing boy characters with whom it is so easy for children to empathise. The combination of text and illustration subtly conveys the difficulty of saying goodbye to a loved one in a moving yet reassuring way.

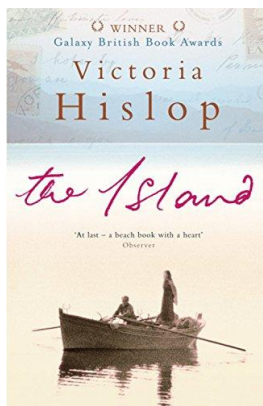


Harry Miller's Run by David Almond, illustrated by Salvatore Rubbino
Walker 9781406362244

Originally included in last year's staff pick Half a Creature From the Sea, this wonderfully told short story by David Almond has been published in this beautiful new edition with enchanting illustrations from award winning illustrator Salvatore Rubbino. The story centres around Liam, a young boy taking part in the Junior Great North Run who just wants to train with his friends. His mother, however, has other ideas and instead takes him to help out Harry Miller, an old man with a fantastic story to tell.

Rubbino's clever illustrations complement the emotion of the story beautifully, moving from greys and blues to illustrate the sadness of Harry Miller's last day in his home as he prepares to move to St Mary's Nursing Home to a palette of vibrant colours as he recalls the wonderful memories of the day he ran with his friends to South Shields from Newcastle. A poignant and evocative tale from the unique voice of a master storyteller.

Anna



The Island by Victoria Hislop
Headline 9780755309511

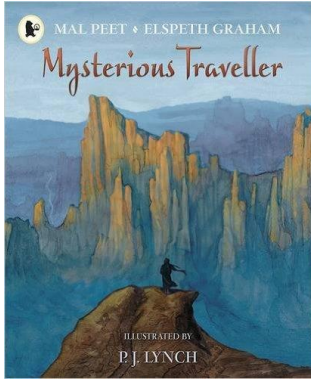
A bittersweet adult historical novel filled with life's contradictory flavours; passion and illness, love and tragedy, death and hope, betrayal and loyalty. I loved it as I got to know more about the fate of leprosy sufferers in pre-war and wartime Greece and have an insight into the emotions experienced when being taken away from your family and living in isolation. I read this book in less than three days and it definitely captured my mind and heart.

Farrah



Greenling by Levi Pinfold
Templar 9781783700554

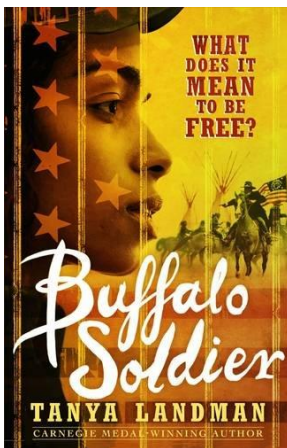
In a world that grows smaller by the day whilst its inhabitants grow farther apart, a book like this is invaluable and will always have a place. The illustrations have an ethereal quality whilst simultaneously being rooted in a reality we can identify with. The fear and hostility that is etched into the faces of the characters at the arrival of this unknown Greenling and the way their lives are profoundly transformed by its presence are testimony to the importance of opening our hearts and minds to the ways in which others can enrich our lives.



Mysterious Traveller by Mal Peet and Elspeth Graham, illustrated by P J Lynch
Walker 9781406354522

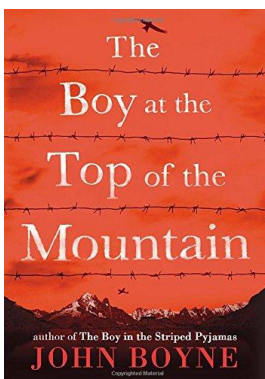
This touching tale explores the power of humanity and the notion that gifts can come in many unexpected forms. The beautifully delicate illustrations complement the spirit of the story and the message that, sometimes, the very things that we think will break us are the things that have the capacity to save us. Although published in 2013 I think its message is all particularly pertinent and all the more moving in light of Mal Peet's passing earlier this year. His gift of storytelling will live on in the pages of his books and continue to touch generations to come.

Eshan (Fatim's son, aged 11)



Buffalo Soldier by Tanya Landman
Walker 9781406314595

I chose to read this book because it won the Carnegie Medal 2015, and was recommended to me by the school library. It didn't fail to meet my expectations. It was a brilliant book about a black slave who was treated like dirt under her master's rule. She soon hears about Abraham Lincoln, The Yankees and the Confederates, and the American Indians. She thinks that she can find help from the Yankees and then realises that she can trust no-one. With her sister and sister's husband killed, alone and frightened can she survive with no-one to turn to? And most importantly, where in America can she find her freedom?



The Boy at the Top of the Mountain by John Boyne
Doubleday 9780857534521

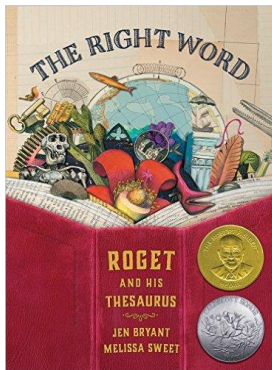
I chose to read this book as I thoroughly enjoyed his world famous first book *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. This book was better than his first book. It was more engaging and deep and better written. It shows the change that Pierrot goes through as he experiences more of his German heritage, and becomes less and less French and more and more German. When his mother dies he has to go to Germany to be looked after by his only blood relative, his auntie. He is taken under Hitler's wing and turns from a petit sweet boy to mean tough boy. He grows further from his Jewish friend, Anshel Bronstein and stops writing to him. Will Pierrot ever be the same again?

Kate



The Mystery of the Clockwork Sparrow by Katherine Woodfine
Egmont 9781405276177

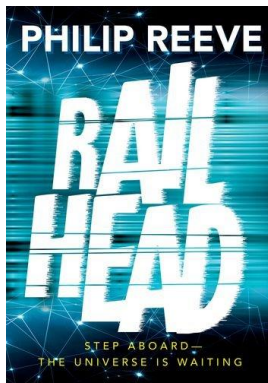
As Sinclairs department store opens it attracts some of London's most dangerous criminals. As unsuspecting staff get sucked into their plans they have to fight to solve the crime and save their own reputations. This crime fiction story has the comfort of tea time buns and the excitement of chases round Edwardian London. Fast paced, it's perfect for devouring in one sitting.



The Right Word: Roget and his Thesaurus by Jen Bryant and Melissa Sweet
Eerdmans 9780802853851

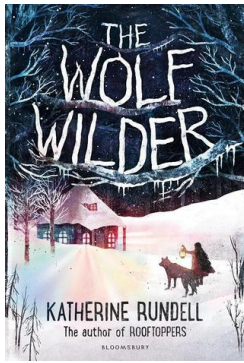
A beautifully presented biography of Roget and the process of creating a thesaurus. The text is compelling and the illustrations feel like you are working from Roget's desk with his notes scattered around you. A chance to learn about how one of our most popular reference books was put together but also to think about how you would go about classifying the world. You'll want to go back and back to it just to find what you missed in each illustration.

Katie



Railhead by Phillip Reeve
Oxford University Press 9780192742759

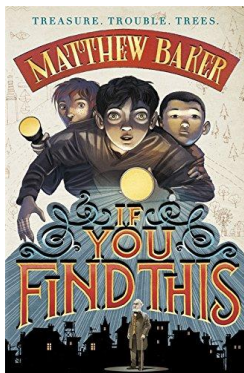
The book is set in a future in which sentient trains ride the Great Network between galaxies and where the central character, petty criminal Zen Starling, finds himself involved in plot that could change everything. The book explores the way in which humans interact with and use technology, including examining the possibility that androids will become a central feature of our existence. This relationship is explored through Ren's friendship with Nova, an android who challenges his ideas of what makes someone 'human'. Gender roles are cleverly inverted as are perceptions of race, challenging our current ideas and values in a very subtle way. A fast paced and entertaining read which really left me thinking about it long after I had put it down. I would recommend this to both children and adults!



The Wolf Wilder by Katherine Rundell
Bloomsbury 9781408862582

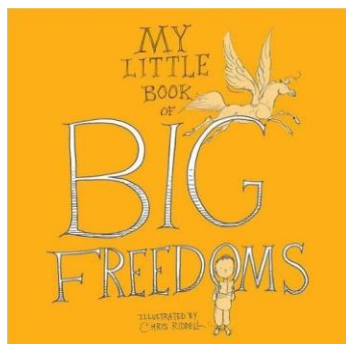
This book is set in the depths of the Russian woods. The central character Feodora lives with her mother, a Wolf Wilder, and she is a wilder in training. As the title implies, the women work to make the wolves wild again, following their captivity in Aristocratic Russian homes. After they are threatened and Feodora's mother is captured by the Russian army, Feo leads the wolves and a motley army she has gathered to the capital to set her mother free. This book really captured my imagination, I loved the concept of 'wilding' animals as opposed to 'taming' them and the relationship between the wolves and the young girl in the story is tenderly portrayed. Another fantastic strong female lead character from Katherine Rundell who challenges conceptions of how girls 'should' behave. I also really enjoyed the historical links to the Russian Revolution. A great book for winter nights by the fire!

Louise



If you find this by Matthew Baker
Hot Key 9781471404528

A book that I haven't been able to stop thinking about since I first read it. It is so multi-layered and interesting, the characters in it are unusual but beautifully described and the story is very, very exciting. I can't think of a child I know who wouldn't be able to connect with this on some level.



My Little Book of Big Freedoms illustrated by Chris Riddell
Amnesty International 9781873328804

This is a beautiful and important little book all about the Human Rights Act. The words of the act are simplified and the sixteen freedoms associated with it are each illustrated by the Children's Laureate, Chris Riddell. The words are simple but not simplistic and the illustrations are touching and heartfelt, making this very complex piece of law understandable as well as providing a compelling argument for standing up for the freedoms safeguarded by the Act.