

THE PRIZE OF PRIZES: THE HISTORY AND  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
CALDECOTT PRIZE

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## ABSTRACT

### The Prize of Prizes: The History and Development of the Caldecott Prize

Doctor of Letters Dissertation by

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The epitome of “the best of the best” children’s book illustrations is denoted by the Caldecott gold seal. The Caldecott Award honors the books that were chosen for superior artistry and creativity in children’s books the prior year. The illustrations encompass numerous styles and media. In different ways, they expand the reader’s knowledge and imagination. The pictures often speak directly to the child. Caldecott books are used in classrooms across America and the world and read by hundreds of thousands of diverse families, as they are so rich in illustration and prose. In order to visualize the progression of pictures, in this study the Caldecott books are read in chronological order (1938 to present). In viewing the Caldecott books this way, the use of artistic techniques and the evolution of them becomes apparent. While the benefits of young children having access to high-quality books is something that adults know instinctively, the discussion around and reputation of the Caldecott Awards serve as a reminder to parents and educators that good books are one of the ultimate teaching tools and sources of efficacious entertainment for children. The Caldecott books have brought awareness to the concept of celebrating and elevating children’s literature. The Caldecott books have a tremendous value in that they let children experience a wonderful

confluence of art and reading. Through these books, children get exposure to numerous diverse art styles and media. Books represent a unique look into the cultural landscape and values that are the norm of their day. They represent what is occurring in society and what is presented to young, impressionable children. The cultural work that children's books do goes far beyond entertaining children—they do bridge the gap between generations, and they promote and reflect the values and aesthetics of their day. The Caldecott books occupy a unique space in the world of children's literature, promoting quality illustration for children that comforts them emotionally; challenges them intellectually and socially; and invites them to engage, on their own level, with the artistic, sociopolitical, and moral questions and currents of their day.

## DEDICATION

In memory of my beloved mother, Nan D'Adamo

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When walking on Drew University's campus I felt as if I crossed over into a very special private time and place that was for me, apart from anything else. I need to acknowledge Drew University and all that it encompasses.

I have been given so much.

## PREFACE

“It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child.”

-Pablo Picasso

This quote by one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century poignantly explains the merits of children’s art. For an adult to illustrate a picture for a child, it must be relatable to the child. To be of the mindset and skills to illustrate for children is not an easy feat. Edgar Degas takes this premise even further: “A picture is something that requires as much knavery, trickery, and deceit as the perpetration of a crime.”- Degas. Perhaps Degas was “intimating that artlessness is always an artful illusion” (Graham-Dixon).

Parents are rightly selective about the artwork—including that in books—to which they expose their children. Before making a purchase, parents usually research an item or look for reviews by professional people in that area before making a choice. This is particularly true with respect to books; parents are careful when they are making decisions on what books to bring into their household, or to read to their child. The Caldecott books shout, “I have the gold medal seal of approval by a group of people who’ve been elected for their expertise in this arena, so you can’t go wrong with me” (Williams). For this reason, Caldecott books perennially sell well and are trusted by parents and educators.

The Caldecott books are highly coveted by collectors, teachers, parents, and librarians. If you should stumble across an affordable copy of Robert McCloskey’s *Make Way for Ducklings*, with “First Published August 1941” on the copyright page as well as the \$2.00 publisher’s printed price, do not hesitate to purchase it. This is an incredibly



rare collectable because of how well-loved and well-read this book was (and is), and therefore it is difficult to find “fine” or “near fine” copies of the first edition. As such, these first editions with the aforementioned points sell for anywhere from \$10,000-\$20,000, depending on the condition, with copies that are signed or inscribed by McCloskey fetching a higher sum (*Books Tell You Why*). *Make Way for Ducklings* is not the only Caldecott to achieve this.

But beyond the practicality of purchasing Caldecott Award-Winning books for children—because of knowledge that they are deemed to be objectively of high quality or because, as collectors’ items, they are monetarily valuable—it is even more important to consider the lasting effects these books have on their intended audience and why these books so effectively meet their objective of inspiring in children a love of learning and imaginative exploration. My own personal and professional experiences have highlighted for me the importance of the confluence of illustration and text that characterizes Caldecott books, bringing imagination to the forefront in the learning experience.

I have always found books captivating, particularly children’s literature. Children’s literature lends itself to a greater capacity for creativity, particularly the illustrations as they are unbound and unaltered by the literal. There are no parameters to them; changing scale size, arbitrary color use, fantasy, and the extraordinary prevail. Children’s illustrations do not follow the norms and constraints that adult literature typically does. The illustrations are artistic, playful, fun, and so alive. This creativity is paramount in the Caldecott Award-winning illustrations. The Caldecott pictures serve as the precursors to the text. For a child, the picture registers before the prose. The pictures in Caldecott books speak for themselves.

Still to this day I remember a children's book about hats that my mother gave me. How I loved that book and the cover; it depicted flamboyant hats flying into the sky due to strong winds. The owners of the flying hats looked just as unconventional. I cherished my books. My love of them has grown over the years and I still judge a book by its cover. Just having books near brings peace within. Seeing them on my bookcase, knowing they are there for me, is very comforting. I would venture that everyone has had a favorite children's book. Adults often fondly remember a book from their childhood that touched them.

As a former elementary school teacher, I read daily to my primary grade students. I always gravitated toward books rich in illustration, seeking only the Caldecott Award Winners because of my orientation to art. Not knowing the full merits of this literature, one might assume, as I did initially, that they are just juvenile children's books that represent limited content and potential as teaching tools. When I further explored this collection of books, I was surprised by and extremely impressed with the wealth of information that is offered by the Caldecott books, through both text and pictures. These books rightly deserve their accolades, for they are child-friendly and speak to universal life events, history, moral issues, and culture. The information these books present is put forth in a way that appeals to children, allowing age-appropriate information to be conveyed. Without the illustrations, the text would not have half as much meaning for children, and children would not fully receive and appreciate the content the books convey. Moreover, the illustrations each in their own way are exceptional!

For example, imagine the following non-fiction history books without the pictures: *So You Want to Be President?* (2001) (The illustrations are hilarious, and one

would not want to miss them, as they carry the book); *Snowflake Bentley* (1999) (one has to see the snowflakes!); and *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* (2004) (these illustrations put the reader right up on the tightrope with Phillipe). Without the pictures, the text most likely would seem too long for the children to sustain their interest; therefore, without captivating illustrations, some information surely would not be fully conveyed. Imagine *Where the Wild Things Are* (1964) or *The Polar Express* (1986) without pictures! Anyone who has read these books thinks first of the imagery that creates the atmosphere for the stories—then the narratives themselves. The illustrations allow the prose, and the illustrations and text collaborate flawlessly in the Caldecott books.

I remember each weekly trip to the children's section at the library as a teacher kneeling on the colorful rug and looking over countless rows of books to choose from. The illustrated book's cover was the determining factor in deciding whether to open it. At the end of a long day at school we ended with the warmth of a beautiful picture book, sitting in the back of the classroom in our reading area. This time magically transported us to places and pictures beyond our imaginations. We were entertained and introduced to new ideas, new cultures, and new places. Viewing the children's faces served as my barometer; there was a direct correlation of excitement and emotion upon viewing a picture that was "great." The more "artistic" the illustration, the more of a reaction that followed. The cover of the book definitely serves as a precursor to the story. The Caldecott books were my starting point, as I knew they were guaranteed to have passed all criteria for both art and prose. They never disappointed me, or the children.

Whether we are children or adults, the Caldecott books truly resonate within us

all. Who does not remember Max from *Where the Wild Things Are*, or the little boy looking out his window as *The Polar Express* magically stops outside to take him on board to the North Pole, or in *Madeline's Rescue* where, “ In an old house in Paris that was covered with vines lived twelve little girls in two straight lines the smallest one was Madeline” (Bemelmans). I could go on and on. These represent a small sample of ageless iconic illustrations. Generation after generation have read and will read these highly acclaimed Caldecott books displaying the celebrated medal.

The experience of teaching elementary grade school and teaching kindergarten through grade eight arts enhanced my appreciation of visual esthetics and love of art. My professional and personal experience with art and children's books has led to this point. The Caldecott books have been precursors to my art career and this dissertation; I had not recognized the centrality of the Caldecott books in my life until I embarked on the research for this dissertation.

Moreover, the tangible impact that these Caldecott books has left on countless children through the decades is immeasurable. These funny, outrageous, and creative picture books are really the gateway into children's minds, allowing them to learn about values, morals, history, people who inspire, people who took chances, different cultures, ethnicities, and fables. These books—and those that will be awarded this distinguished prize in the future—will continue to inspire and live within classrooms, libraries, and in a mother's arms at night as she reads to her children. Generations will celebrate these books.

The Caldecott books have impressed me so. I hope you will read them to your children, or, if you are a teacher, to your students. In numerous ways they are gateways to

further learning. They are among the world's most distinguished picture books. And, as British historian, critic, and publisher Jenny Uglow has written: "Few things evoke childhood memories as powerfully as picture books."

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak.”

-John Berger (7)

Julie Cummins, previously the coordinator for children’s services for the New York Public Library, states that there are many awards that recognize excellence in children’s book illustrations, although the most coveted awards are the Caldecott Medal and the Caldecott Honor (4).

The epitome of “the best of the best” children’s book illustrations is denoted by the display of the Caldecott gold seal. The seal, a facsimile of the real medal, depicts a horseman being chased by a group of young children. The Caldecott Award honors the books that were chosen for superior artistry and creativity in children’s books the prior year. To put this into perspective, according to Kathleen T. Horning, author of *From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children’s Books*, there are approximately five thousand new books for children being published in the United States every year. It would seem likely that this number has increased over the years. Only one of these each year is recognized with a Caldecott Medal, and only several more with the Caldecott Honor. Therefore, less than one one-thousandth of children’s books published receive these distinguished honors.

The Caldecott Medal is a prestigious award that illustrators would consider the Oscars of children’s literature. This annual award was born in 1939, making it now 80 years old. According to the American Library Association (ALA), children’s books are defined to include intended audiences of persons of age up to and including fourteen, and

picture books for this entire age range are to be considered. The guidelines set forth by the Caldecott committee will be further explored within the contents of this dissertation (ALSC Board, “Caldecott Medal – Terms and Criteria”).

Colorful characters are found within the pages of the famed Caldecott books. Some are fictitious, and others are true to life. In some, characters are depicted as animals. The illustrations encompass numerous styles and media. In different ways, they expand the reader’s knowledge and imagination. The pictures often speak directly to the child. One example of a Caldecott book that brings an important message directly to children on their own level is *Where the Wild Things Are*. Meet a little boy named Max, who is feeling powerless, as he was sent to his room for being naughty. A private boat appears and escorts him to an island *Where the Wild Things Are*. When there, Max becomes very powerful and tames the Wild Things (the monsters), who permit him to become their king. This story allows children to work through their fears and gain control over the monsters and be at peace with their punishment. *Where the Wild Things Are* also taps into fear of monsters, which is a very common fear among children. As they are in this book, the pictures and themes must be relatable to a child, and these illustrations bring to light a common event in life.

Children are generally more visually aware and alert than adults, making them the perfect audience for Caldecott books. The more we age, the more our visual awareness is likely to be dulled by the overload of daily responsibilities. This process is further explained by Chris Van Allsburg, famed illustrator and three-time Caldecott honoree, having received two Caldecott Medals and one Caldecott Honor, as described by Kim Herron in a 1989 article in *The New York Times*:

Van Allsburg has frequently observed that *The Polar Express* is about faith - the faith that children, trailing clouds of glory, bring into the world and that is slowly lifted from them during childhood, in the name of growth. Perhaps protective of his younger followers, he assures me that “the book is autobiographical.” Then he turns to the subject of why and where the line between childhood and adulthood is drawn, and why some are allowed to retrace their steps. “That sense of wonder is tolerated in artists,” he says, “and the reason is suppressed in general is probably that parents and society feel it’s too risky to let things like that survive. They feel these things are in conflict with the responsibilities of adulthood; they are in conflict with maturely taken over your place in a rational world. (Herron)

This sense of wonder is not only permissible but required for artists to truly capture children’s imagination and curiosity about the world.

In order to be a candidate for a Caldecott, certain requirements must be in place. The illustrator must be a United States citizen, the illustrations must be original work by the illustrator, and the book must be published in the United States. A committee of fifteen men and women meet each year to discuss and vote on the winner. Every two years different committee members are selected to serve as judges. More in-depth information will follow on the specifications involved, as they are set forth by the ALA.

The Newbery award preceded the Caldecott Medal, and was the catalyst for the institution of the Caldecott. Each year the Newbery Medal award is given for the most distinguished author of the best American children’s book published the previous year. To identify a Newbery award-winning book, the reader sees a silver seal on the cover with a picture of an older man with two children, as the children receive a book from the



man. Books that do not win the Newbery Medal but that the committee deems worthy of note were previously named “runners-up” but in 1971, books in this category were named—both moving forward and retroactively, Newbery Honor books.

Caldecott and Newbery books are used in classrooms all across America and the world and read by hundreds of thousands of diverse families, as they are so rich in illustration and prose. In fact, many have been made into moving pictures, including blockbuster films. Others have been made into children’s book series, including merchandise. For example, from the Madeline series, Madeline, Miss Clavel, and Pepito figures abound. Max and *Where the Wild Things* toys are also merchandised. The business side of the awards generates substantial revenue. There are many ways that the Caldecott books have an impact; for example, as a byproduct of winning a Caldecott, the recipients’ careers have taken flight. Further to be explored are the following aspects of the Caldecott books: Richard Caldecott’s legacy; the elements of the Caldecott books: the terms and criteria for the award, the content of the illustrations contained in the Caldecott books; the stories, subjects, themes, genres and how the stories have changed over time; the interplay of prose and illustration; the creative minds behind many of the Caldecott winners; and, taking all of these points into consideration, how the Caldecott Awards have transformed and elevated children’s literature.

In order to visualize the progression of pictures, in this study the Caldecott books are read in chronological order (1938 to present). In viewing the Caldecott books this way, the use of artistic techniques and the evolution of them becomes apparent. The progression of the art illustrations itself is very interesting. The pictures grow in sophistication, along with artistic technique. For example, some illustrators now use

computers to create drawings. In contrast, the simplicity of the earlier drawings may not have the same cache but possesses simplicity, pureness and innocence. Janet Schulman, author of *The 20th Century Children's Book Treasury*, explains this further: "When a child sees an illustration they come to it with fresh eyes they do not see it as adults do" (vii). From our vantage point, we see it as dated or old fashioned; however, to children, these images are exciting and new, and the visuals draw them into the story.

A perfect example of the dedication of an illustrator immersing himself in his subject and seeing it from a fresh perspective—the perspective of a child—is Robert McCloskey, who created black and white drawings of charming ducks in 1942's winner, *Make Way for Ducklings*. Also worth noting is that much hard work in creating the illustrations for the early Caldecott books was performed behind the scenes. The drawings were not bleak, but compared to the newer Caldecott illustrations, the older books lacked a fantasy-esque quality. Conversely, they were simple and exemplified pureness that are not seen in newer Caldecott winners. As Leonard S. Marcus notes, in order to prepare for *Make Way for Ducklings*, McCloskey studied Mallard specimens for over two years at the American Museum of Natural History and discussed duck anatomy with an expert on birds. Being the perfectionist he was, he brought some live ducks at the city market to serve as models. Sixteen ducks eventually came to live with him (Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 8). I have found similar types of dedication with every illustrator. All illustrators in their way researched their subjects thoroughly and are intimately connected with them.

In addition to the concurrent complexity and simplicity of the illustrations, the text also shares many virtues. The Caldecott books are clearly literature put forth in an

understandable, age-appropriate way. Many, such as *Smoky Night* (1995), *This Is Not My Hat* (2013), and *Golem* (1997), involve moral, cultural, and ethical teachings. Others, such as *Grandfather's Journey* (1994), introduce children to other cultural norms, social structure, life transitions, and cultural beliefs. A significant number are historical in content, such as *Mirette on the High Wire* (1993), *So You Want to Be President?* (2001), *The Glorious Flight* (1984), *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* (2004), *Finding Winnie: The True Story Of The World's Most Famous Bear* (2016), and *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat* (2017), among others.

Perhaps one of the best books to fall into the historic genre is the Caldecott winner in 2004, Mordicai Gerstein's *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*. Gerstein chose a beautiful way to commemorate the 9/11 tragedy. He tells the story of Philippe Petit, a tightrope acrobat who actually did walk between the World Trade Towers in 1974. The highly skilled illustrations contained therein are marvelous as viewers feel that they are right up there on the tightrope with Philippe. The perspective in the illustration adds to the drama. One sees the symbols in the curvature of Earth as the sun rises and the Statue of Liberty sits in the far-off harbor.

The following passages from *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* exemplify the manner in which sensitive subject matter is put forth. The somberness of the text, coupled with the illustrations, are pure symbiosis. The first is describing Philippe's walk, "Out to the very middle he walked, as if he were walking on air itself. Many winds whirled up from behind the towers, and he swayed with them. He could feel the towers breathing. He was not afraid. He felt alone and happy and absolutely free" (Gerstein). The final passage only hints at the tragedy, "Now the towers are gone. But in

memory, as if imprinted on the sky, the towers are still there” (Gerstein). These elegant words are illustrated by showing the outline of the translucent towers. The reference to the word “Free” is very poignant and carefully chosen due to the 9/11 tragedy. The text puts forth serious subject matter in an age-appropriate way. Both text and image are needed to complete the other. Text and image working in symphony will be further explored in later chapters of this dissertation.

In today’s high-tech world, young children are seen playing games on their mothers’ iPhone or iPad while sitting in their carriage. Despite the omnipresence of technology, I believe that a book can never be replaced. In his Caldecott acceptance speech, Gerstein confirms that, ““Books are still one of the greatest of all human inventions. In a book, you could hold the imagination of another person in the palm of your hand and explore it at your leisure-true magic”” (qtd. in Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 3).

The benefit of reading books to children extends beyond children’s imaginative development. When a parent reads to a child, there is a direct connection: a tangible, intimate one. It is further enhanced when the parent has a child on his or her lap while reading a book to that child. This connection is visceral. Books also facilitate a dialogue between parent and child. The lasting psychological and family dynamic benefits from reading reap rewards for years to come.

Further, the visual elements of picture books help children to develop independent thought and critical thinking skills. Children bring forth their excitement, hopes, sadness, and imagination when viewing and reading a book. A young child will first look at the illustrations and interpret them before reading the text. Their natural proclivity is to view

their world in an egocentric way, and picture books allow them the space to interpret it their way. In addition, picture books also foster creativity, independence, language skills, problem solving, and critical thinking.

While the benefits of young children having access to high-quality books is something that adults know instinctively, the discussion around and reputation of the Caldecott Awards serve as a reminder to parents and educators that good books are one of the ultimate teaching tools and sources of efficacious entertainment for children. The Caldecott books have brought awareness to the concept of celebrating and elevating children's literature. Just the presence of the gold seal on a cover speaks volumes. The gold seal lets potential book buyers know that the work is a piece of high-quality literature.

The Caldecott books have a tremendous value in that they let children experience a wonderful confluence of art and reading. Through these books, children get exposure to numerous diverse art styles: impressionism, surrealism, realism, pointillism, cartoon art, and more. They are exposed to various media used: watercolor, monochromatic art, pre-separated art, scratchboard, stippling, and gouache paint. Various styles of drawing, including incorporation of strategic viewpoints and cartoon techniques, show expertise in composition. Some of the illustrators' art is influenced by famous artists such as Picasso, Monet, Magritte, and others, and these influences are reflected in their illustrations. Through the Caldecott illustrations children are being exposed to exceptional art. The artwork in and of itself stands alone. In fact, many illustrations have been shown in museums. Each illustrator's media and art style are noted with the individual Caldecott book. Beyond technique lies authenticity of personal experience that is reflected in the

Caldecott illustrations. The illustrators' and authors' work comes directly from their personal narrative: an event, a desire, an emotion, or something from their childhood that resonated.

The following sentiment from 1938 winner, Dorothy Lathrop's Caldecott acceptance speech, explains the personal element in working on quality children's literature:

“For a person who does not love what he is drawing, what ever it may be, children or animals, or anything else, will not draw them convincingly, and that, simply because he will not bother to look at them long enough to really see them. What we love, we gloat over and feast our eyes upon. And when we look again and again at any living creature, we cannot help but perceive its subtlety of line, its exquisite patterning and all its unbelievable intricacy and beauty. The artist, who draws what he does not love, draws from a superficial concept. But the one who loves what he draws is very humbly trying to translate into an alien medium life itself, and it is his joy and his pain that he knows that life to be matchless.” (qtd. in Ortakales)

Dorothy Lathrop was passionate with her art and she often drew animals and felt that children should not be sheltered from images that might seem scary. Maurice Sendak also believed this, which will be further explored. Maurice Sendak is widely considered the most important children's book artist of the twentieth century. Because of this legacy Sendak is one of the illustrators that will be thoroughly presented. His Caldecott acceptance speech along with others can be heard on the American Library Association Institutional Repository.

Every Caldecott book is represented in this dissertation; some receive more attention than others. This coverage was hard to do for every book and in one way or another each has so much to offer with much literature written on its merits. The decision regarding what books to focus on was based on the acclaim and impact they generated. Numerous sources were considered with a focus on the ALA. The books that stand out more than others include *Make Way for Ducklings*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, *Jumanji*, *Madeline's Rescue*, *The Polar Express*, *The Snowy Day*, all of David Wiesner's books, and *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat*. Each stands out for different reasons that we will explore in detail in the coming chapters.

Some of the historical Caldecott books are understandably not politically correct by today's standards. Some show stereotypes, as well as racial and sexual overtones. These depictions are indicative of the time periods of which they are products. Although some cultures are not depicted respectfully, the illustrations were celebrated for their artistic merit—and at the times of their composition, the books were deemed appropriate. Some people may choose not to read these books to their impressionable children. These images can be seen to a young child as the norm, thus setting a destructive presence. Conversely, they could help to educate and provide the impetus for conversations that respond to prejudices and cultural differences. This is highly subjective to the parent. The Caldecott books that depict these challenging temporal realities are in a small minority and have now had revisions in their wording. However, parents and educators must use their best judgment in whether to share such books with children, as books certainly have the ability to influence a child for better or for worse.

In this dissertation my intent is to present information that explores each book in

many facets that can provide reference for parents, teachers, and librarians in a practical way, as all facets of the Caldecott books are so interconnected. These books rightly deserve every accolade. They have left and will continue to leave a mark on countless numbers of children around the world, enriching them in both tangible and intangible ways. Throughout the dissertation excerpts are cited from some of the Caldecott winners' acceptance speeches. In reading their reactions, I, too, experienced their joy, as I have an appreciation of the work involved that went into each book. For the readers' further reading and reference, I include additional references about the illustrators and their books. Information about the artist, both professional and personal, is also included; for the work of artists, the personal and the professional are intrinsically connected. Winning a Caldecott Award changes the illustrator's career overnight. What are their reactions? Some are included in these chapters. They vary; for example, when things calmed down a bit for David Wiesner (three-time Caldecott winner) for *Tuesday* (1992), he sat back and listened to a tape of his favorite rock group, The Ramones, turning it up full blast. Others celebrated in a more public way. As we proceed through this dissertation, we will join in the celebration of all of the Caldecott awardees, while critically examining the work they have done to elevate children's literature, each in a unique way. Let us embark on this journey with the imagination of a child, with the seasoned understanding of adults who seek valuable resources for the intellectual and psychological development of children.



## Chapter 2

### ILLUSTRATING TEXT AND THE HISTORY OF PICTURE BOOKS:

#### THE GROUNDWORK FOR FORMAL ASSESSMENT AND APPRECIATION

Before exploring the Caldecott designation and its effects, it is important to lay the groundwork; to venture through the history of picture books and to linger for a few moments in the underpinnings of the illustration of text. By doing this, we shall set the stage for the reasoning and technique behind the illustration of modern picture books for children and the for the institution of the prestigious Caldecott Medals and Honors.

#### **A Brief History of the Picture Book**

The precursors to picture books can be traced back to the earliest paintings on cave walls. Martin Salisbury and Morag Styles trace the roots of picture books, beginning with prehistoric Europe. Some examples of early narrative illustration, they note, from France and Spain may be 30,000-60,000 years old. These depictions from the cave painters commemorated the hunt, and the shamans' images recorded the supernatural relating to the spiritual and medical. An Egyptian papyrus roll is said to be the oldest surviving illustrated book around 1980 BC. Trajan's Column in Rome is another example of an ancient example of visual narrative, depicting the story of Trajan's victories at the start of the second century AD. In medieval times, illustrators were the scribes who penned the individual manuscripts and also embellished them (Salisbury and Styles 10-11).

Salisbury and Styles discuss Ulrich Boner's *Der Edelstein* (1461), which is often cited as the first example of a book with type and image printed together. Comenius'

*Orbis Sensualium Pictus (The Visible World)*, published in Nuremberg in 1658, is generally seen as the first children's picture book, which in the sense that it was a book of pictures designed for children to read (Salisbury and Styles 12).

As Salisbury and Styles note, the invention of printing in the fifteenth century expanded education in the West. Before this, the wealthy had access to hand-produced literature. In the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, chapbooks (small affordable, pamphlets containing tales, ballads, or tracts) were commonly sold by peddlers known as chapmen. The relationship between text and illustrations was very weak, and the books were largely for decorative purposes. Then in 1789, the painter William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* is seen as the first to experiment with the symbiosis between text and image. His style was independent of anything that was happening to the visual arts at the time (Salisbury and Styles 13).

Wood engraving, as Salisbury and Styles discuss, ushered in the next phase of printmaking. In the late eighteenth century, Thomas Bewick elevated the general development of book illustration with his achievements in wood engraving, taking this art form to a completely new level by moving it beyond the reprographic. Until the 1830s color was applied by hand—that is, until the process of applying color on woodblocks, a form of printmaking, was developed. This new method was a complete game changer for books (Salisbury and Styles 13).

Randolph Caldecott is widely known to be the father of the picture book; Maurice Sendak, “the greatest author of visual literature of our time,” attributes his successes to Richard Caldecott's influence and places Caldecott in the picture book pantheon (Salisbury and Styles 16). Sendak explained: “Caldecott's work heralds the beginning of

the motion picture book. He devised an ingenious juxtaposition of picture and work, a counterpoint that never happened before. Words are left out—but the picture says it. Pictures are left out—the word says it. In short it is the invention of the picture book” (qtd. in Salisbury and Styles 16). Caldecott was also a prodigious draftsman, and his drawings have the appearance of spontaneity and movement, possessing vitality and humor. They also do not shy away from the sadder realities of life, as some of his drawings depict sickness and death of humans and animals; these practices also aligned with Sendak’s values.

The Golden Age of Illustration lasted from the later part of the nineteenth century through the early twentieth century. This time was marked by developments in printing technology, coupled with changing attitudes toward childhood and the emergence of a number of brilliant artists. A new kind of illustration emerged, as the images played a greater role in the book. Peter Pan, Alice, Dorothy, and Tom Sawyer came from the Golden Age.

In the 1930s, *Babar the Elephant* became very popular, along with *Curious George*. The post-war years necessitated paper shortages. The work in this period was characterized by that of Caldecott Award winners Ingri and Edgar Parin d’Aulaire. In the 1950s graphic designers were drawn to the picture book, and in the 1960s Mabel George was instrumental in finding printers who would do justice to the painterly approach, which she accomplished. In turn, the colors in picture books took on increased vibrancy and new life. Another pivotal change came with Maurice Sendak as he changed the whole trajectory when he broke the prior rules of picture books, as seen in *Where the Wild Things Are*. Following suit, the 1970s and on were marked by more unconventional

subjects. New and emerging artists produced illustrations in picture books in the late twentieth century. During this time, momentum increased for graphic artists and technical talents in picture books. With printmaking in place, copies of the old masters became available in prints. These inexpensive copies became accessible, and printmaking became popular with contemporary fine artists.

Editors and art directors at publishing houses collaborated, resulting in high quality book illustrations. Then high-quality picture book illustrations without text began to be reproduced as prints and posters that appeared in galleries and exhibits. Now adults looked at them closely for the first time whereas before they were focusing on the words. Pictures were now looked at in a new light (Lacy 20).

### **Illustration and Text**

“A picture shows at a glance but it takes dozens of pages of a book to expand.”

-Ivan Turgenev

“A picture is worth a thousand words.”

-Anonymous

“What is the use of a book thought Alice, without pictures?”

-Lewis Carroll

The juxtaposition of text and image in picture books invites us to consider in more detail the complementarity of language and illustration. How the two work together to convey one coherent and full message invites both practical and philosophical questions.

The following passage exemplifies the virtues and power of how text can change the image of a picture. Art historian John Berger exemplifies why an image stands

independently until the text is merged:

This is a landscape of a cornfield with birds flying out of it. Look at it for a moment. Then turn the page. It is hard to define how the words have changed the image but undoubtedly they have. The image now illustrates the sentence that Berger presents directly beneath the illustration: “This is the last picture that Van Gogh painted before he killed himself” (28).

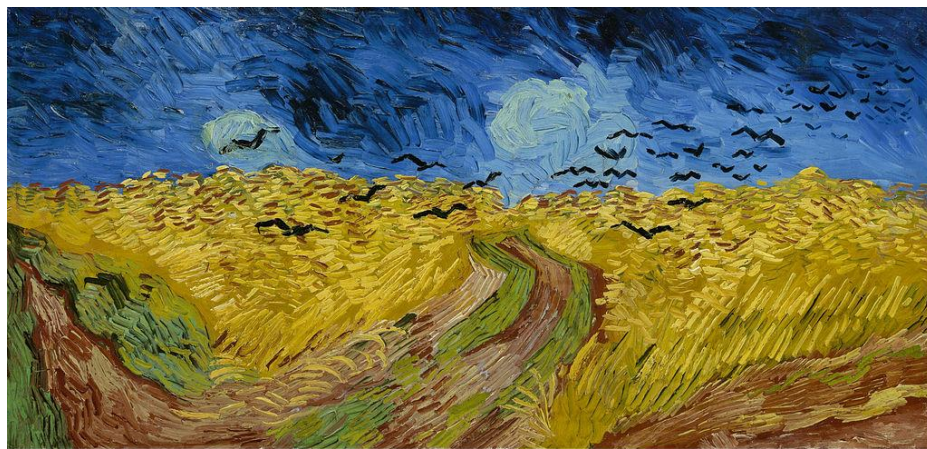


Fig. 1. Vincent Van Gogh, *Wheatfield With Crows*. (Berger 28)

The explanation given directly under the painting changes a person’s initial perspective of the landscape now that one understands that this was the last painting by Vincent Van Gogh before he shot himself.

Mike Venezia, author/illustrator of *Getting To Know The World’s Greatest Artists* book series, explains to the readers that in this picture by Van Gogh the visual clues explain how angry and upset he must have been feeling because he painted a scary sky, roads that led to a dark background, and crows that look like bats. Soon after this painting was finished, Van Gogh shot himself. He died two days later (Venezia 29).

Van Gogh explains what this painting actually means in a letter to his beloved brother Theo: “I have since painted three more big canvases. They are vast stretches of

corn under troubled skies, and I did not need to go out of my way to try to express sadness and the extremity of loneliness” (Stone 478). With reading each passage, one’s perspective certainly evolves. Does text help or hinder the viewer’s perspective? There are times when the text will limit, which can be seen in a children’s picture book; however, the absence of text does not detract from the pictures. In fact, picture books can be used as a vehicle for understanding children, as they will interpret from their psyche. Imagine an illustration of a little boy, sitting in a corner crying. Ask a child, “Why do you think he is sad?” And chances he will speak from his own past or present sadness.

Back in the fifteenth century, Leonardo da Vinci made the following remark about visual storytelling: “And you who wish to represent by words the form of man and all the aspects of his membrification, relinquish that idea. For the more minutely you describe the more you will confine the mind of the reader, and the more you will keep him from the knowledge of that thing describe. And so it is necessary to draw and to describe. (Salisbury and Styles 13)

Da Vinci’s sentiment is true especially for children. Picture books with little or no text allow the child to fill in the blanks: using their words instead of text. Their words and the pictures make the abstract concrete. Unless an adult or child is reading out loud, one is not sure that the child comprehends the meaning of vocabulary in a sentence; the visual connects the words. Without text, the young child will feel as if “they are already reading” when explaining what is happening in the story. In turn, they will feel proud of themselves. When a child narrates what is happening in a story, this fosters creative thinking. Picture books prepare a child for reading readiness.

One can speculate on the importance of text vs. illustration, although in simplistic terms each has a place independent from the other. Particularly with respect to the Caldecotts, both text and illustrations work in unison. That being said, with regard to children's literature, pictures do come foremost. The illustrations are of such a caliber that they will cultivate a child's imagination to compensate and replace the text. A picture book with no text will hold a child's interest; however, just text with no images is more challenging. For example, the 2018 Caldecott winner *Wolf in the Snow* is wordless except for a few words that describe sounds: bark, huff-huff, whine, sink, screech, howl, growl, and, lick-lick—and these sounds are also clues to the pictures' sequence. The pictures tell the whole story. The illustrator/author Matthew Cordell has written many other books and stories but felt that in this book the "Text was really just kind of getting in the way" (Neary, "Winners").

Robert McCloskey explains his process in using text and illustration as follows: "I think in pictures, I fill in between pictures with words" (Blau).

Maurice Sendak reflects on the art of picture-book storytelling, explaining his process of text composition and illustration: "I can compose and recompose in my head until an illustration becomes very clear, like a polaroid" (qtd. in Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 22). What he could show with his illustrations did not also need to be said in words. In *Where the Wild Things Are*, Sendak said, "After trying repeatedly to find the right words to describe the 'rumpus' at the center of Max's adventure. I realized that the pictures alone could best tell that part of the story" (qtd. in Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 22).

Award-winning illustrator Eric Carle reflects further on the relationship between

text and image: “An illustration it’s an enlargement, and interpretation of the text, so that the reader will comprehend the words better. As an artist, you are always serving the words. You must never illustrate exactly what is written. You must find a space in the text so that the pictures can do their work. Then you must let the words take over where words do it best. It’s a funny kind of juggling act” (Carle 74).

Picture books without words serve significant purposes; they develop positive attitudes towards reading because most children enjoy reading them. The children are in control with their book in hand. Any interpretation is reasonable, so children are unlikely to fail in the storytelling. Children develop oral language skills as they speak their impressions of what is happening, what will happen next, seeing cause-and-effect relationships, and then drawing conclusions.

Librarians, teachers and parents should be careful not to crush children’s spirit by telling them “that book is too hard for you” and proceed to pick one out for them. There is something about the images in books that children select that speaks to children—and even if they miss some words, they will improvise; the pictures will guide them along. Picking out a book for a child that he or she may not like could turn him or her off from reading.

The continuum of text is vast, ranging from no text, to a few words, to full text with illustrations. When text and pictures work in unison, symbiosis is present. Due to the rigorous requirements set by the ALA, the Caldecott winners all meet these standards. One can assume that all is in place when a Caldecott book is read.

What goes into choosing a picture? When reading the Caldecott books one initially might wonder just how are the judges able to separate the illustrations from the



prose. Can they be separated? For most children's picture books—and most certainly for Caldecott winners—the illustrations and prose are independent yet interdependent; however, based on the fact that pictures register first for children, the illustrations are foremost: the illustrations bring the prose to life. Typically, in Caldecott books, the illustrations are larger than the text; therefore, the reader will notice them first due to their size. Some books show the illustration adjacent to the text, which directs the reader's sequence of approaching the story. If a picture book has no text, the story is read primarily by images and the child will still understand the story. In addition, picture book illustrations reinforce the story.

The placement of text on a page has changed dramatically from the traditional layout with a picture on one side of the page and the text on the other. Now the text can also be part of the art. In the picture book *Wolf in the Snow*, the sparse text (representing sounds) directs the reader to areas of importance on the page. These words are not placed below the illustrations, but are part of the picture. There are many instances where text has been used unconventionally, adding a whole new element to the picture. David Macaulay's *Black and White* is another example where text takes the reader on a journey along with the pictures. Macaulay's use of text, illustration, and the layout style is new to the Caldecott books. The ALA deemed picture books to include readers up to 14 years. *Black and White* is an example of a book that would even be enjoyed by an adult due to the uniqueness and creativity of the book. The placement and the size of the text also has changed through the years, and these changes are represented in the Caldecott books. For example, the text can be seen on one side of the book's page, right or left by itself, mixed with the picture, part of the picture, placed in a compartmental particular area with the

picture, or placed in a different color panel. In addition, the size of the font affects the text's visibility and importance.

The illustrations also are extremely effective in determining the mood of a picture book. For example, the mood in *The Polar Express* (1986) is mysterious, and Van Allsburg uses dark colors to establish that mood. Muted colors help create an eerie atmosphere. In *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine* (1967), the dark tones underscore the drama and impending tragedy of the story. In essence, the illustrations in more ways than one guide the child through the book. Since every Caldecott book's illustration cannot be represented fully in this dissertation, sample illustrations are presented that will show diversity through the years. One cannot overstate the important function that pictures serve; after all, man's earliest pictorial storytelling dates back to the cave wall paintings. Through this medium, readers have learned about that period in history, customs, values, fears and religious beliefs. Still today, visual artwork provides us with keen insights on the values of our own society, as well as the challenges we face together. Nowhere is this more evident than in children's picture books.

On a personal level, from my past years' experience with teaching elementary school children, I cannot imagine that their interest would be sustained if the illustrations in a picture book were banal or sparse, irrespective of the prose. I foresee that the visuals in children's books will evolve to keep up with the fast-paced visuals of the world of today, although I am concerned that children's books may fall short compared to the technology that is readily in hands of children. Although children's books will remain relevant and serve as valuable learning tools, I fear that adults might instead choose to provide children with devices that remove the personal element from the learning

experience. Retired children's librarian Rita Auerbach, who chaired the 2010 Caldecott Award committee, explains one of the many important functions of picture books: ““They give children a sense of pictorial possibility—a way to imagine words that they might not imagine on their own”” (qtd. in Neary “Colorful Anniversary”). No number of electronic devices in a child's hand can provide this. It is my hope that this dissertation's discussion of the Caldecott books will inspire future generations of parents and educators to continue to choose these high-quality children's books for the children in their care.

## Chapter 3

### THE MAN WHO INSPIRED THE AWARD, AND HOW IT IS WON

#### **Randolph Caldecott**

Now, we turn to the namesake of the prestigious Caldecott Award. His noteworthy work brought a new level of artistry to illustration for children. Understanding his contributions to the field of illustration for children's literature enhances appreciation of the award that bears his name.

Randolph Caldecott (1846-1886) is often called the father of the picture book. He is seen as one of the greatest and most influential illustrators in the field of children's literature. Born in nineteenth century England, Caldecott, a famed illustrator, was very much admired by the master artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Maurice Sendak and Beatrix Potter ("Randolph Caldecott"). His name is often associated with Walter Crane and Kate Greenaway, as they formed the triumvirate of illustrators who began the new era of picture books for children in the 1870s; collectively, they became known as the "Academicians of the Nursery" ("Randolph Caldecott"). His style was to depict minutely observed scenes of animals, dancers, and people enjoying daily life. In 1876 he began with the books *The House That Jack Built* and *The Diverting History of John Gilpin*. The first printing of 10,000 copies sold very quickly, which assured his success. Sixteen books went on to win international acclaim. Caldecott continued his career, which won him international renown. He was commonly known as the "Lord of The Nursery." He continued illustrating children's books until his health declined. Hoping the warm weather would improve his health; he sailed to Florida, but sadly died

in 1886 at the age of 31. He left behind a legacy that is greatly revered in America and in 1938 Randolph Caldecott was memorialized as the Caldecott Medal. Renowned artist Beatrix Potter reflected on Caldecott in a letter in 1942, “I have the greatest admiration for his work—a jealous appreciation...He was one of the greatest illustrators of all” (“Randolph Caldecott Facts”). Caldecott was one of the most influential children’s book illustrators in the nineteenth century, due to the fact that his illustrations were unique to their time in both their humor and their ability to create a sense of movement, vitality, and action that complemented the stories they accompanied.

Although the Caldecott Awards and Honor medals were memorialized and named after Randolph Caldecott, Frederic C. Melcher created the Caldecott Award. Fifteen years prior to the Caldecott, Melcher founded the Newbery Award—in 1922. The Newbery Award is given to the most distinguished contribution to American children’s literature.

René Paul Chambellan designed the medal that is printed on the cover of Caldecott winning books in 1937. The emblem has “Awarded annually by the Children’s and School Librarians Sections of the American Library Association” inscribed on it. This is because the Section for Library Work with Children invited the School Libraries Section to name five of its members to the awards committee each year.

Randolph Caldecott made an indelible mark on children’s book illustration. His tangible mark, the Caldecott Medal, weighs 3.1 ounces and has a 2 and one-third inch diameter. The circumference for the medal is approximately 7 and one-third inches. The medal is not worn, but presented in a wood box for display.

Lyn Ellen Lacy, author of the book *Art and Design in Children’s Picture Books*, explains the ongoing appeal and acclaim of these awards:

Other awards and selected lists contain as many prestigious picture-book offerings and represent as many talented illustrators as does the Caldecott collection, but no other collected body of work in this country is as well known for providing early quality book experiences for the young children. None include more obtainable titles or has been more subjected to as much critical and bibliographical scrutiny. No other large group of titles has been more represented in audiovisual format, more sought after in manuscript form by institutional depositories dedicated to the preservation of children's literature, or offers a wider variety of subject matter and artistic treatment for appreciation by older as well as younger children. No other collection can enhance appreciation of all picture books as a graphic art form as can the Caldecott books. (21)

The Caldecott Medal is also one of the oldest book awards in the United States and is respected by outsiders as well as insiders in children's literature. Examining the winning books allows us to trace the development of and best practices in children's picture book illustration for nearly a century. As Lacy said in 1986: "The collection of more than four dozen Caldecott Award winners represents a chronological spectrum of American artists from pre-World War II to the present" (20).

### **The Process**

The Caldecott Medal is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the ALA, to one of the most distinguished American children's picture books published the previous year. The first Caldecott Award was given in 1938, and the Medal has since been awarded to one distinguished recipient each

year. The ALA site presents a complete listing that includes the Newbery Honor Award (also known as the “runners-up”).

Numerous picture books are published each year. What are the determining factors in choosing a Caldecott winner? Since numerous highly skilled illustrations are presented every year, one might think that there might be some subjectivity involved. However, the subjectivity is minimized, to the extent that it can be, by the stringent criteria that the ALA requires for books to be considered for the Caldecott. When the members of the ALA meet, every aspect of books is discerned. Just what distinguishes the winner? How has this changed over the years? It would seem likely that the judges must get very impassioned in discussing the merits of the books that they feel strongly about. The following is a quote from a member of the selection committee discussing the deliberation process and shows how the process evolves:

We discussed artistic style. Was this book painterly? Did the abstract expressionism of the art match the text? What was it about the line that made you want to turn the page? We learned so much from each other. We listened to each other and shared our feelings and experiences with well over one hundred books. (ALSC 14)

The selection committee follows very specific terms and definitions in choosing the recipient of the award. The terms, definitions, and criteria are directly taken from the ALA as follows:

Terms:

The Caldecott Medal shall be awarded to the artist of the most distinguished American Picture Book for Children published by an American publisher in the

United States in English during the preceding year. There are no limitations as to the character of the picture book except that the illustrations be original work.

Honor Books may be named. These shall be books that are truly distinguished.

The award is restricted to artists who are citizens or residents of the United States.

Books published in a U.S. commonwealth are eligible. whether or not he be the author of the text.

1. The committee in its deliberations is to consider only books eligible for the award, as specified in the terms.
2. A “picture book for children,” as distinguished from other books with illustrations, is one that essentially provides the child with a visual experience. A picture book has a collective unity of story line, theme, or concept, developed through the series of pictures of which the book is comprised.
3. A “picture book for children” is one for which children are an intended potential audience. The book displays respect for children’s understandings, abilities, and appreciations. Children are defined as persons of ages up to and including fourteen and picture books for this entire age range are to be considered.

#### Definitions:

1. “Distinguished” is defined as:
  - a. Marked by eminence and distinction; noted for significant achievement.
  - b. Marked by excellence in quality.



- c. Marked by conspicuous excellence or eminence.
  - d. Individually distinct.
2. The artist is the illustrator or co-illustrators. The artist may be awarded the medal posthumously.
  3. The term “original work” may have several meanings. For purposes of these awards, it is defined as this artist and no one else created the illustrations. Further, “original work” means that the illustrations are presented here for the first time and have not been previously published elsewhere in this or any other form. Illustrations reprinted or compiled from other sources are not eligible.
  4. “American picture book in the United States” means that books first published in previous years in other countries are not eligible. Books published simultaneously in the U.S. and another country may be eligible. Books published in a U.S. territory or U.S. commonwealth are eligible.
  5. “In English” means that the committee considers only books written and published in English. This requirement DOES NOT limit the use of words or phrases in another language where appropriate in context.
  6. “Published...in the preceding year” means that the book has a publication date in that year, was available for purchase in that year, and has a copyright date no later than that year. A book might have a copyright date prior to the year under consideration but, for various reasons, was not published until the year under consideration. If a

book is published prior to its year of copyright as stated in the book, it shall be considered in its year of copyright as stated in the book. The intent of the definition is that every book be eligible for consideration, but that no book is considered in more than one year.

7. “Resident” specifies that author has established and maintains a residence in the United States, U.S. territory, or U.S. commonwealth as distinct from being a casual or occasional visitor.
8. The term, “only the books eligible for the award,” specifies that the committee is not to consider the entire body of the work by an artist or whether the artist has previously won the award. The committee’s decision is to be made following deliberation about books of the specified calendar year.

Criteria:

1. In identifying a “distinguished American picture book for children,” defined as illustration, committee members need to consider:
  2. Excellence of execution in the artistic technique employed;
  3. Excellence of pictorial interpretation of story, theme, or concept;
  4. Appropriateness of style of illustration to the story, theme or concept;
  5. Delineation of plot, theme, characters, setting, mood or information through the pictures;
  6. Excellence of presentation in recognition of a child audience.
7. The only limitation to graphic form is that the form must be one which may be used in a picture book. The book must be a self-contained

entity, not dependent on other media (i.e., sound, film or computer program) for its enjoyment.

8. Each book is to be considered as a picture book. The committee is to make its decision primarily on the illustration, but other components of a book are to be considered especially when they make a book less effective as a children's picture book. Such other components might include the written text, the overall design of the book, etc. (ALSC 5-8)

Committee members read as many of the nominated books as they can in the year prior to selection. The members then vote for which they believe deserves the award. They place books in first, second, and third place. The winner must have eight first place nominations to win this prestigious award. After the winner is chosen, the committee decides to name Honor Books (runners-up) and decides how many books will be awarded a Caldecott Honor medal.

Since the Caldecott Award and selection process has been in place for so long, the collection of Caldecott books is truly impressive, comprising a whole library for children. Lacy discusses the unique nature of the books in the Caldecott collection:

Other awards and selected lists contain as many prestigious picture-book offerings and represent as many talented illustrators as does the Caldecott collection, but no other collected body of work in this country is as well known for providing early quality book experiences for young children. None includes more obtainable titles or has been subjected to as much critical and bibliographical scrutiny. No other large group of titles has been represented in audiovisual format, more sought after

in manuscript form by institutional depositories dedicated to the preservation of children's literature, or offers a wider variety of subject matter and artistic treatment for appreciation by older as well as younger children. As a review of societal mores and artistic styles deemed suitable at different times in America's changing views of childhood, no other experience for young and old alike offers better insights into the complexities of making judgement statements in the field of children's literature. And finally, no other collection can enhance appreciation of all picture books as a graphic art form as can the Caldecott books in a hands-on evaluation with youngsters themselves. (21)

It is the ALA's commitment to artistry in children's literature, as working in symphony with the other elements of the books, that marks the Caldecott books. Caldecott books are not just "good books"—they go beyond this trite designation, promising a unique and paradigm-changing experience for the children and adults who enjoy them.

In the next chapter, we will take a journey through all of the Caldecott Medal books, exploring how, through time, their subjects and techniques have changed, but their ability to capture the imagination of children and adults alike has remained constant—or perhaps have even grown.

## Chapter 4:

### AND THE WINNER IS . . . :

#### THE CALDECOTT BOOKS FROM 1938 THROUGH 2018

In this chapter, the Caldecott Award-winning books are grouped in ten-year increments, starting from inception in 1938. The following information is included to varying degrees, based on the appropriateness for each book: synopsis of the story, pertinent background information about the story; information on the illustrator and/or author's personal and professional life; and artistic attributes of the illustrations. Each Caldecott book's section ends with information on its genre, subjects and age recommendation. A sample illustration is represented from every book in Appendix F. Through the discussion of the books, the trends in illustration, subject matter, and cultural context will become apparent.

#### **Caldecott Books – 1930s and 1940s**

The 1930s and 1940s Caldecotts, as the earliest awardees, were simplistic and light-hearted and used characters who were pure and wholesome. The illustrations were realistic and simplistic, with some variation. The themes, for the most part, were nature and animals, with some focusing on history, religion, and other cultures. Interestingly, during a time when mankind was engulfed in many devastating conflicts, there were no Caldecotts that delved into these negative situations. Perhaps this is because the world was reeling from World War II, and the books were possibly meant to protect the innocence of the children.

1938: *Animals of the Bible, A Picture Book*. Illustrated by Dorothy P. Lathrop, written by Helen Dean Fish.

This book is the first of the long legacy of Caldecotts. Fish describes the animals of the Old and New Testaments from the King James Version of the Bible. Stories such as Noah's Ark and the first Christmas are depicted. This book is akin to an illustrated Bible for children. The text is directly from the Bible, and the verse stands alone. The stylized Art Deco illustrations are in black and white, incorporating all the spectrum of values. Other techniques used are linear cross-hatching, stippling, and pointillism. The images of Jesus and Eve are illuminated, thus giving them a magical-celestial power. The use of many animals throughout adds a friendly image for the child's eye, as animals are a familiar image for them and generally looked upon positively. *Animals of the Bible* is timeless; it resembles a reference book. The animals are depicted with reverence.

In the foreword of *The Animals of the Bible*, the author states: "During the drawing of these pictures, the artist studied not only the fauna but the flora of Bible lands and times, and each desert rose as well as each goat and turtle dove is as true to natural history as is possible to be" (*Animals of the Bible*). This story is a perfect complement to be used for religious teachings, coupled with the and accurate depiction of the animals and flowers of Biblical times. This is a soothing book, perfect for nighttime reading.

Dorothy Lathrop's career spanned from the end of the golden age of illustration into modern times. She received numerous awards for both her writings and illustrations.

Genre: Mythology, folktale, with a historic setting.

Subject: Judeo-Christian, God, religion, animals, nature.

Ages: 6+

1939: *Mei Li*. Written and illustrated by Thomas Handforth.

A little Chinese girl named Mei Li wishes to go to a New Year's fair; however, only boys are allowed. Mei Li uses some ingenuity in bringing her brother along, which allows her entrance, and she shows him how useful she can be. This story provides a link to the Chinese culture and to the norms of that period—both Chinese cultural norms and American responses to those norms. Thomas Handforth changed the narrative of the injustices that he saw in a subtle, yet significant, way.

This story was inspired by Handforth's personal travel experience. When in China, Handforth (1897-1948) saw that there was a disparity between the privileges of boys and girls. Through this story Handforth empowers girls, and in turn girl and boy readers will see a different narrative which has the power to bring forth change (irrespective of how slow).

Handforth's inspirations for his drawings were directly connected to people, places, architecture and events in his life. Handforth had been fascinated with the Orient since childhood, and lived in Peiping for six years during the 1930s. Handforth's career took off when he received a Guggenheim fellowship to China. He was inspired by their world and of the people around him. Many of them were used as models for this book including the orphan, Mei Li. His illustrations reflect his careful observations during his time there.

The ALA's publication *Art and Design in Children's Picture Books: An Analysis of Caldecott Award-Winning Illustrations* by Lyn Ellen Lacy is often referenced throughout these pages for its critical analysis. Regarding *Mei Li*, Lacy writes:

Although names and characters are Americanized in Mi Li and by today's

standards the book includes samples of sexist and cultural stereotyping, it still offers a fine example of traditional narrative picture-book art. Its reproduction by early letterpress using copper plates and hand-set type adds a further note of interest. . . . The illustrations are in black and white. Handforth pictures have invisible horizontal, circular, and diagonal framework. (59)

Aside from children's stories, Handforth's etchings brought him attention in the art world, and at the time he was considered to be an expert in Asian art. The Portland Art Museum and The Smithsonian American Art Museum house collections of his etchings, drawings, and lithographs. The Portland Art Museum's website includes an online display of his artwork ("Thomas Handforth").

Genre: China, travel, sibling issues, a strong girl characterization.

Ages: 4+

1940. *Abraham Lincoln*. Written and illustrated by Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire.

This biography is a tribute to Lincoln's many accomplishments, such as freeing the African American slaves. Given his limited amount of education—he did not attend school past age six—his accomplishments are remarkable. This biography has a very human quality to it, as it relates many anecdotal stories of his life. This includes the time he serendipitously finds a law book in a barrel at the store where he is working. He studies it and becomes a lawyer, and then becomes the president. The story exemplifies how a chance encounter led to a chain of events. Children will surely find the depiction of American pioneer life in the 1800s interesting. For example, what Lincoln ate and wore and the one-room schoolhouse in which he was taught. His presidency is not



recognized until the last twelve pages of the book's fifty-six total pages.

Some pages are in black and white; others incorporate color used strategically on points of importance. Scale size placement is used to stress the areas of importance. The use of presenting a foreground, middle, and background contrasts young Lincoln's large stature; he appears as high as the treetops, which add to his presence of strength. An example that depicts this is shown as three boys are looking up admiring Lincoln. The use of scale size between the boys and Lincoln poignantly contrasts Lincoln's importance.

The Parins' depiction of Abraham Lincoln is drawn with such accuracy that it is "faithful to photographic reality: the portrait of Lincoln with son Tad by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire in their 1940 Medalist Abraham Lincoln. The rocking-chair pose of the president is strikingly similar to a Matthew Brady photograph from the Civil War period" (Lacy 174).

Genre: realistic non-fiction, biography.

Subjects: American history, biography, country life, politics and war.

Ages 9+

1941. *They Were Strong and Good*. Written and illustrated by Robert Lawson.

This is an autobiographical story by a proud grandson who narrates it as he recounts the ways his parents and grandparents each in their own way struggled as immigrants, learning different languages and contributing to their new country. *They Were Strong and Good* also shows how immigrants assimilated but kept their character true to their personal belief system. The depiction of the subjects suggests reverence akin

to the methods of scale size for effect as with *Abraham Lincoln*. For example, a man on a horse is depicted as very honorable, similar to the way Lincoln was, with his head reaching up into the clouds (larger than life) as a child also watches in awe. For a child, this book will create a link between people of the past and ways they all contributed to the country, which enhances their perspective of the present.

Black tempera is used with a line brush to achieve the cross hatching which also shows the gradation of light and dark contouring and texturing the figures and backgrounds.

“The story is to children of today an example of early black-and-white picture-book illustrating-as well as one of racial and sexual stereotypes in art and literature of another age” (Lacy 141). After 1940, a couple of changes were made to the text, for example, the language was put forth in a more respectful way, as the Indians and Negro slaves replaced the racial slur, “colored boy.” In light of these changes, the book recounts a factual time in history, while underscoring the unconscionable manner in which people were treated.

Genre: Non-fictional American history

Subjects: Biography, country life, family, history, war, pioneer life, family pride.

Ages: 7+

1942. *Make Way for Ducklings*. Written and illustrated by Robert McCloskey.

This book brought Robert McCloskey immediate acclaim. McCloskey drew his story-book characters up close and personal as he explained in his Caldecott speech: “I spent the next weeks on my hands and knees, armed with a box of Kleenex and a

sketchbook, following the ducks around the studio and observing them in the bathtub””  
(qtd. in Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 6).

Robert McCloskey did indeed observe his ducks with precision. He went out and purchased ducks so he could observe them close up. They came to live with him in his New York apartment.

Looking at his realistic illustrations of the ducks, one cannot help but empathize with the Mallard duck family; they are seen as a family with engaging personalities, walking together and talking. Children particularly connect to the images of animals and birds. These images are immediately relatable to them. In this story, Mr. and Mrs. Mallard search for a safe place to lay the eggs while walking around Beacon Hall, Charles River, and The State House, which are actual places in Boston. McCloskey wanted the Boston Public Garden and surrounding streets to be recognizable, although he focused more on the elements that a child would notice, such as the “detail of the wrought iron fence that a child would put his hand on or run a stick along as he walked by” (Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 6). The Mallard family then searches for a safe home, believing they found it at Boston’s Public Garden, until people, cars, and bicycles got in their way. The illustrations of the ducks waddling around are endearing while keeping the reader’s interest in anticipation of them finding a safe spot to call home. These slightly whimsical black-and-white drawings are illustrated with the use of real-life perspective. The illustrations are drawn with a duck’s-eye view of the city. The use of shading and dark value draws attention and perspective to the subject. The medium used is lithographic crayon on zinc plates and charcoal drawings with letterpress text.

“He often said he didn’t know anything about children’s literature. ‘I think in

pictures, I fill in between pictures with words,' he said" (Blau). He emphasized that illustration is not an add-on to text; rather, "'Drawing is most of all a way of seeing and thinking'" (Blau). As Marcus notes, "McCloskey worked on the illustrations, he trimmed the text, letting the pictures tell more of the story" (*A Caldecott Celebration* 9).

Robert McCloskey was from Maine, although his ducklings are depicted wandering through the city of Boston and finally finding their way to the Public Gardens. The duck statues built at the public gardens memorialize McCloskey's ducks and attract many visitors that pose for photos with the popular ducklings. Visitors can ride the Swan boats and even walk the same path that the ducklings did in the book. The famous Mallard duck family is immortalized where children can meet them today. A walking tour called Walk Boston highlights the Public Gardens attractions that are featured in the book. On Lagoon Path, "*Make Way for Ducklings* statues (1987) by Nancy Schon—Fictional Jack, Kack, Lack, Mack, Nack, Ouack, Pack and Quack imagined in a real setting. . . . Swan boats and dock-signature watercraft [began] in 1877 and [is] still operated by the Paget family" (*WalkBoston: Making Massachusetts More Walkable*).

*Make Way for Ducklings* was published in the fall of 1941. Reviewers praised the book then, adding to its popularity. The story has humor and warmth, and children see a sense of security by its story of the close-knit Mallard family. This feel-good story contrasted with the political climate of World War II. The book was published at a tumultuous time in American history: "Weeks later the United States entered World War II, and in the months ahead the story's promise of security and a father's safe return came to mean a great deal to the children of a nation at war and *Make Way for Ducklings* served as a comfort for children"(Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 11).

*Make Way for Ducklings* left its mark not only in the literary world but in a tangible way as “*Make Way for Ducklings* went on to become one of the most-loved of all American picture books, as well as one of the children’s books most closely identified with an American locale. In 1987, the year of the Boston Public Garden 150th anniversary, a bronze sculpture of Mrs. Mallard and her children was placed in the Gardens in celebration of the gentle story that had become inseparably linked to the image and life of Boston. The sculpture was designed to encourage young children to climb on it. Four years later a duplicate was shipped to Moscow and installed in a public park as a gift ‘giving in love and friendship to the children of the Soviet Union on behalf of the children of the United States’” (Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 12). Bob Shaffer, in a 2017 article, credits the mallard ducks with easing tension between the U.S. and Russia. Former first lady Barbara Bush gave the sculpture to Raisa Gorbachev, Mikhail Gorbachev’s wife. The public art offering mirrored a time when the two countries signed a major nuclear arms treaty: the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START 1). The START 1 treaty limited how many warheads and intercontinental ballistic missiles the U.S. and the USSR could have.

McCloskey is a two-time Caldecott winner. In 1958, he won for *Time of Wonder*. He is also the recipient of three Caldecott Honor Books 1948, *Blueberries for Sal*; 1952, *One Morning in Maine*, and (1953) *Journey Cake, Ho!* (as illustrator only).

Genre: fiction with historical depictions of Boston.

Subjects: Boston, birds, ducks, nature.

Ages: 2+

1943. *The Little House*. Written and illustrated by Virginia Lee Burton.

A happy home sat in the countryside surrounded by flowers and fresh air until the area becomes citified. Streetlights, apartment houses, a subway, and 25-story buildings encroach upon it. The same placement of this little house is depicted as the center of interest consistently, which is a concrete visual for a child and is somewhat akin to a flipbook style. Initially, the seasons come and go, illuminated by the night stars until the stars can no longer be seen due to the artificial lighting of modern civilization. The little house becomes displaced amidst it all. As these bad changes occur, the house and surroundings change from their former happy bright primary colors (red, yellow, blue) to dull ones. The colors evoke a somber mood, and the illustrations somewhat resemble those of Folk Art.

Burton based her artistic style on her real-life experiences. She would first draw the illustrations before adding the words. When possible, she would attempt to use pictures rather than words. This composition technique has also been noted by other Caldecott illustrator/authors.

Burton had a captive audience: “To test her work, Burton wrote for her sons. She would read her books to her sons to gauge their interest in the story. If after a month of reading the same book every night they would stay awake, Burton would know her book was ready for publication, allowing her style to be well received by children and adults alike” (Bekx). In 1952, because of the book’s success, Disney created an animated short based on *The Little House*.

Genre: fiction

Subject: cities, country life, cars, construction, environment, machinery, nature, seasons.

Ages: 2+

1944. *Many Moons*. Illustrated by Louis Slobodkin, written by James Thurber.

Princess Lenore becomes ill and is suffering from eating too many sweet raspberry tarts (a relatable concept to a child). Her father, the King, hoping to make her happy, asks what he can get her. Although the King's resources are vast, Lenore assertively asks for the Moon. Despite this unobtainable request, he tries to solve this dilemma. In the end, she is given a moon-like necklace from the jester. This appeases her, as it fits her image of how small the moon looks when viewing from afar. *Many Moons* is an interesting story of relative truths.

The watercolor illustrations by Slobodkin (1903-1975) lend themselves to a soft, somewhat abstract look. The loose and squiggly drawings are appropriate for this fairy tale story. The art is frequently outlined with color inks. The uniqueness of watercolor's property is in its ability to achieve a transparent to opaque look depending on how much pigment versus water is placed on the brush. The princess is often shown in more transparent uses of watercolor, whereas the King's clothes are almost bright opaque, which adds to his stature as King. Another unique feature of these illustrations is in the use of prose as a border.

Slobodkin's artistic style is notable for its transparent-watercolor images, often outlined in black, and use of negative space. Slobodkin's illustrations are suggestive of scenes from a stage, focusing more on shapes than on specific details of faces. He also uses negative and white space to add depth to his illustrations.

Slobodkin's drawings for *Many Moons* were exhibited at The Metropolitan

Museum of Art in New York in 1943. The book was adapted into an opera by an American composer, Celius Dougherty, in 1963. It was first performed in schools throughout the New York area, and in 1946 *Many Moons* was adapted for the stage by Charlotte Chorpenning.

Slobodkin was also a sculptor and created 65 pieces, including his famous “Abraham Lincoln, Rail Fence Mender” which debuted in 1939 at the World’s Fair. He exhibited in museums, private collections, and in government and public buildings.

Certain images are often constants in children’s books, such as animals, trees, and the moon. The moon image appears in *Many Moons* (Slobodkin), *Owl Moon* (Yolen), and *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak).

Genre: Fairy tale

Subjects: Fairy Tale, Princess, castles, King

Age: 4+

1945. *Prayer for a Child*. Illustrated by Elizabeth Orton Jones, written by Rachael Field.

This religious-based book with one or two sentence text on the left side mirroring the picture to the right is straightforward with no embellishment. “Bless this; bread, toys, shoes, lamp light, fire, chair, bread, milk and mothers and fathers.” *Prayer for A Child* is similar to the storybook *Goodnight Moon* (non-Caldecott book, 1947, Margaret Wise Brown) in that the main character, a child (or bunny rabbit, in the case of *Goodnight Moon*) cites things for which she is thankful. The book is narrated by the little girl, which creates a direct connection to the viewer, presumably another little child. The illustrations are very child-friendly in that the same little girl is frequently depicted. She is a relatable



image with which a child will identify. An illustration shows the little girl smiling at her mom and dad. The viewpoint focuses on her as the viewer, how she is seeing her mother and father from the back. The viewer could then transfer the image of his or her parents to the little girl's. This strategic use of a non-descript parents fosters intimacy for the reader. The color is monochromatic, lending itself to a sense of unity. A sense of movement is found in Jones's drawings, be it in the curl of the child's hair or the way the little girl is seen bending her knees. The strategic use of curved and organic shapes is softer to the eye than geometric, man-made shapes. As Lacy explains, "*Prayer for A Child* demonstrates a use of idealized proportion for shapes, and by representing people and things not as they really are but in preconceived artistic perfection, offering model images of people and ideas for edification of the very young" (171). Jones's art frequently combined detailed realism with a vibrant use of color and happy expressions on the child's face. This storytime book exudes calmness, humility and gratitude.

Genre: bedtime, nighttime, poetry

Subject: religion, prayer, God.

Ages: 2+

1946. *The Rooster Crows*. Written and illustrated by Maude and Miska Petersham.

The content of this book is also ageless. American rhymes and jingles fill the pages. Readily recognized by most: "Star Light, Star Bright," "This Little Piggy Went to Market," "Little Miss Muffet," and "Mary Had a Little Lamb." These familiar words are sure to renew each day as generation after generation recites these for the first time.

The illustrations have a unity of color per page. Some pages are remarkably

brighter colors, appearing to give accent/stress to them. This sharp contrast also serves to hold a child's interest. The settings and clothes are dated in appearance—for example, with bonnets and overalls. In spite of this, the use of primary colors (red, yellow, and blue) are used in the composition, lending to a sense of color balance in the scenes. The primary colors coupled with very child-friendly images of animals: a flying elephant, lambs, and more are sure to appeal to children.

Maud and Miska Petersham were both American writers and illustrators. They worked together in partnership for over fifty years and produced numerous illustrations for more than 120 trade books, textbooks and picture books. Of the fifty books that were written and illustrated, many went on to be recognized by awards with critical acclaim. They are known for technical excellence, vibrant use of color, and introducing international folk and modernist themes (Webster 39).

Genre: nursery rhymes, jingles, poetry

Subjects: historical America, farm, children, pilgrims, animals, and country life.

Ages: 2+

1947. *The Little Island*. Illustrated by Leonard Weisgard, written by Golden MacDonald (pseudonym for Margaret Wise Brown).

This story is about the idyllic life of an island in Maine: the metamorphosis of its inhabitants and passage of time and seasons. On a deeper level, this book explains “the importance of everything’s place in the world”: “but I am part of this big world and a world of its own” (MacDonald). This Little Island shows how it provides a very important function for its inhabitants and broaches a more abstract concept of faith as a

subject. For example, the book includes a discussion of “Faith, to believe what I tell about what you don’t know” (MacDonald). The picturesque illustrations of the island fill the pages. The peaceful sky and landscape depict reverence. The strategic use of alternating black and white illustrations and color help contrast the change of seasons. The subject matter is timeless, and this book is sure to continue to be read in elementary schools as summer approaches. It is most fitting to seasonally display this book in bookstores year after year.

*The Little Island* represents Weisgard’s movement towards lush pictures of nature imbued with illustrations, showing gulls, deer, seascapes, windswept shores, and placid forests. These rich pictures create a mood of reverence for nature. Cool colors are often depicted: blue, green, blue-green, and blue-violet. Cool colors appear to recede from the picture and suggest depth, as cool colors are akin to the sky and water. This style reached its pinnacle in the lavish Golden Books (around 1880 to the early twentieth century, to produce the finest works in Children’s literature). *The Little Island’s* nickname became the “Egg Book” as “The orchard” suggesting a sudden splurge of Beauty-for-Beauty’s sake. The picturesque scenes were thought to be too contrived. Some critics felt the illustrations were too pretty. The most famous Brown-Weisgard collaborations are *The Golden Egg Book* (1947), about a cute bunny waiting for a duck’s egg to hatch, and *The Golden Bunny* (1949). They were published by Golden Books, which had successfully started a new method of distributing picture books cheaply. These books were sold in supermarkets and chain stores. So the child-friendly, oversized ‘Egg’ and ‘Bunny’ books reached millions of young readers. Brown was inspired by her love of nature, which she wanted to share with children. These “beauty for beauty’s sake” books did just that.

Weisgard met Margaret Wise Brown in her New York office in 1938. Their partnership worked because they believed the same things about children's books. Greg Cook cites Leonard Marcus as he explores this professional partnership: "Weisgard, like Brown, placed his faith in a new modern style of children's picture book, committed—particularly in his early graphic works—to 'the idea that he was leaving more to the children's imagination,' Marcus says" (Cook). Marcus continued: "'He wanted children to think they were living in an exciting time. There's always a sense of movement, always they're leaning forward'" (qtd. in Cook). Margaret Brown also wrote the acclaimed non-Caldecott books *Goodnight Moon* (1947) and *The Runaway Bunny* (1942).

In Weisgard's Caldecott acceptance speech in 1947, he said, "'Children are never as disturbed as grown-ups by contemporary artists, a streamlined plane, or a gallery of modern paintings, they see an image with real meaning and vitality and sometimes with incongruence humor giving it a sharper reality'" (qtd. in Cook). This idea of children as seeing art for what it really is underlies Weisgard's technique and motive in his illustration of *The Little Island*.

Marcia Brown, three-time Caldecott winner of *Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper* (1954), *Once A Mouse* (1962), and *Shadow* (1982) and Weisgard shared an interest in combining modernist aesthetics with progressive educational ideas. Cook quotes Leonard Marcus' explanation of Weisgard's groundbreaking work:

"Historically, Weisgard was the leading illustrator in America to introduce the spirit of Modernism to children's book art," says Leonard Marcus, perhaps the foremost scholar of children's books in the United States and the curator of "Magician of the

Modern: the Art of Leonard Weisgard” at the Eric Carle Museum of picture book art in Amherst.

Weisgard’s art evolved into modernism as a better, deeper way of communicating. He felt that art crosses boundaries in age, culture, and education, and that it could be understood by just about anyone.

Genre: fiction

Subject: island life, boats, ocean, weather, birds, insects, spiritual connections, scientific facts, and the mutual dependency that occurs in nature.

Age: 3+

1948. *White Snow, Bright Snow*. Illustrated by Roger Duvoisin, written by Alvin Tresselt.

*White Snow, Bright Snow*’s catchy, rhyming poem begins the story. When the snow arrives the townspeople explain, in their own unique way, what the snow means to them. For example, “the policeman’s wife’s big toe hurts,” “the children have snowball fights,” and “the postman slips falling on the ice.” Then spring emerges, leaving the reader to envision the cycle of that season: “The postman slowly delivered his mail so he could enjoy the bright sunshine” (Tresselt).

Adults and children in different ways relate to the pictures and words, as they ring so true. The grownups busy themselves with practical matters, such as shoveling the snow and cleaning the snow off the cars. The children, on the other hand, view the snow in a totally different way; they run outside to play and make snow men and other winter structures.

The illustrations fill every inch of the pages’ foreground, middle ground, and

background. The colors repeated on many of the pages are yellow and reds, which are part of the primary color family: red, yellow, and blue. The people, houses, and natural surroundings that would normally be depicted in many more color choices are not—only red and yellow are used. These primary colors also stand out among the white blanket of snow. The use of gray and white is equally important in conveying the contrast. The illustrations are drawn with a sense of infinity, akin to the vastness of a snow-covered landscape. The young audience will relate to the illustrations as they are of geometric and organic shapes. The text is just as child-friendly in its description of snow on the cars: “Automobiles looked like big fat raisins buried in snow drifts” (Tresselt). This description seems as if it is said by a child, and children can relate to it.

Roger Duvoisin began his 1948 Caldecott acceptance speech by describing the same paralyzing snowstorm that Berta and Elmer Hader (1949 Caldecott Award winners) portrayed at Willow Hill in *The Big Snow*. Duvoisin lived in Gladstone, New Jersey, and remembered the famous twenty-four-inch snowfall of 1947 that stopped trains dead in their tracks. The artist spent two days shoveling “to clear our five-hundred-foot drive of *White Snow, Bright Snow*” (Lacy 145). Duvoisin’s vision for this story was clearly inspired by the snowstorm and his love of snow. Lacy discusses how Duvoisin’s motive is simultaneously personal and universal: “Duvoisin himself described his pictures as personally inspired by childhood love for snow, like all childhood memories, strong enough in all of us to make us open our hearts to everything connected with snow” (147).

Genre: picture book

Subject: winter, snow, weather, seasons, children playing

Age: 3+

1949. *The Big Snow*. Written and illustrated by Berta and Elmer Hader.

*The Big Snow* highlights American wildlife's diversity and describes how the forest animals prepare for the winter; some are depicted storing food, some grow thick hair for insulation, and others fly south. The passage of seasons' effect is shown through an animal's perspective, which highlights the animals' vulnerability to the natural elements. This story informs children about animals that are outside of their immediate environment. The wildlife studies educate children as they learn how large or small animals are in relation to other animals, the characteristics of male and female of each species, the anatomical distinctions that separate one class of creature from another and, most importantly, to care for and respect animals which is essential to their survival.

The illustrations are in black and white (resembling Sepia color) with contrasting, colored ones. The contrast enhances the depiction of the animals as they stand out amidst the vast snowy landscape, adding visually to their vulnerability. Conversely, the spring is depicted with some earth colors (sienna brown) and cool colors (blue, green). The use of alternating full black and white pages contrasting with colored illustrations highlights the differences between spring and winter.

Lacy describes the work of the Haders in the tradition of naturalism, but shows that it is most fitting for, and appealing to, children: "Except for the figures of the Haders themselves toward the end of the book, *The Big Snow*'s art resembles much found in nonfiction books intended for children's edification about nature. In subject matter and romanticized artistic style, the book can also be compared with the work of John James Audubon, the nineteenth-century painter and naturalist" (145). Lacy elaborates on the accessibility of the illustrations in this book: The authenticity of "*The Big Snow*'s

illustrations are accepted as true and real, which in most respects they are” (145).

The Haders, in their 1949 Caldecott acceptance speech, also reference the same 1947 snowstorm that inspired Duvoisin. Regarding the snowstorm, they spoke of the snow shoveling, tending to the animals, dragging hay from the shed, and putting out pans of food for the animals. The Haders’ inspiration for this story, like so many other Caldecott Award illustrators’, came from direct experiences. The Haders truly revered their animals and were faithful to the beauty of their live models and hillside that surrounded their home. They explained: “The food problem and the beauty of the snow-covered hillside struck us both as a good subject for a picture book. The models and background for the pictures were right outside our windows. With the subject agreed on, the story seemed to write itself” (qtd. in Lacy 145). This has developed as a theme in the Caldecott winners’ philosophy: seeing the world itself as lending to art. And, as we established in the Introduction, this is also a holistic, childlike view of the world.

Although this story was written in 1949, it has lasting value and has relevance today. It is timeless and perfect to share with one’s children and elementary school students during the winter, as it provides great descriptions and pictures of what the animals do to prepare and make it through the winter. *White Snow*, *Bright Snow* is another book that can be utilized during this season. These books continue to entertain and teach in a fun and inviting way.

Genre: fiction

Subject: snow, animals, birds, nature, seasons, winter

Age: 4+



### Caldecott Books—1950s

The 1950s Caldecotts were similar to those of the 30s and 40s, but were composed in a more serene, “Leave it to Beaver” period of American history. This was reflected in that the books were mostly about nature and children’s tales. Several of these books celebrate bucolic life and American traditions, reflecting a cultural regrouping after World War II. Among the Caldecott books during this decade, Cooney’s *Chanticleer and the Fox* pushed the envelope, as it spoke of good and evil in a more prominent manner, preparing for the more experimental books of the 1960s.

1950. *The Song of the Swallows*. Written and illustrated by Leo Politi.

Every summer in California at the Capistrano Mission on the Feast of St. Joseph’s Day, the swallows come to live until the end of the summer. People still see this miracle in person at San Juan Capistrano; it attracts many visitors from all over the world and has been a tradition since 1930 in Orange County, Southern California. This miracle of the swallows takes place each year on March 19, which is St. Joseph’s Day. The swallows migrate 6,000 miles from Goya, Argentina, to San Juan Capistrano in large groups. This story tells of two children who live in an old mission. The main character, Juan, develops a fondness for the swallows as he watches them daily and observes how they provide everything that they need for survival. The birds know when to leave in the late summer and when to return. Although this story is for children, it has a higher meaning due to philosophical and religious connotations.

The earth colors used (orchard yellow, burnt sienna, browns) in the illustrations are often used in the Spanish culture and are symbolic of life and vegetation. Leo Politi’s

technique was inspired by his attraction to the Mayan culture. The illustrations are either brightly colored or mostly of the brown tones. The story also includes music and lyrics for “La Golondrina.”

A website dedicated to the Mission of San Juan Capistrano details the miracle of the swallows and the Legend of the Cliff Swallows of Capistrano (*Mission San Juan Capistrano*). For the Swallows Story, visit The Swallows Reenactment Exhibit. Other areas covered by this website include history and preservation, religion and spirituality, exhibitions, art and conservation, filming and photography, events and venue, teachers and kids, volunteers, and partners. The material on this website is a wonderful supplement available to today’s readers who want to develop a fuller appreciation of Politi’s book and the impetus behind it.

The Caldecott Award-winning books have influenced many varied cultural icons, such as Pat Boone, who was a successful pop singer in the United States during the 1950s and early 1960s. He performed a song about the swallows in his 1957 album *Pat Boone Sings*.

Genre: Historical fiction

Subject: Mission San Juan Capistrano, historical Chapel, landmark and Museum Saint Joseph, living with nature and harmony, Southern California, nature birds, migration

Age: 4+

1951. *The Egg Tree*. Written and illustrated by Katherine Milhous.

On Easter morning, Carl, his sister Kathy, and their cousins visit their grandma in Pennsylvania. Their first egg hunt takes place on her farm. They each find colorful

eggs—except Kathy. Kathy then wanders into her grandmother's attic to find grandma's traditional, hand painted, Pennsylvania Dutch-style eggs. The eggs soon get displayed on an egg tree. This novelty becomes a tradition, bringing many visitors from all over to see. These illustrations are painted in tempera paint and reflect the use of sepia-like color. Muted hues of brown, green, orange-brown, blue, and yellow are repeated on the pages, with alternating pages of brighter colors. Pennsylvania Dutch folk art tradition typically shows the images of horses and buggies, Hex sign, and tulips, which are symbolic for hope, faith, and charity in German folk art.

Milhous was born in Pennsylvania and grew up in Pittman, New Jersey. Her family's heritage influenced many of her later works. Her background is Irish, Methodist and Catholic, with some Pennsylvania Dutch (she attributes her love of design to influence from her Pennsylvania Dutch heritage). During 1935-1940 she worked as a supervisor for the federal art project, making many posters celebrating rural life in Pennsylvania. Her illustrations were clearly influenced by many characteristics of both Pennsylvania Dutch Art and her poster designs (simple lines, bright colors, and bold forms that exemplify nature and simple living). Ellen Lacy, author of *Art and Design in Children's Picture Books* (an analysis of Caldecott Award-winning Illustrations), states that *The Egg Tree* today is appreciated as an illustrated storybook in the folk-art tradition. It is somewhat historically reminiscent of illuminated manuscripts: the miniature pictures; ornamental borders; and use of flat shape, color, and space as decoration bringing to mind needlework or tapestry. The depictions of the still life of flowers and fruit could look to be Henri Matisse-ish (Lacy 214).

Genre: fiction

Subject: Easter, Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Art inspired style

Age: 4+

1952. *Finders Keepers*. Illustrated by Nicholas Mordvinoff, written by William Lipkind.

Two dogs, Nap and Winkle, find a bone, but they cannot agree on to whom the bone belongs. They ask all they encounter, hoping to have someone solve their dilemma. In the end, they encounter Mr. Longshanks, who indirectly solves it.

The illustrations are vibrant, often-bright reds with full-page coverage. The harsh red color, coupled with the bold lines of the dogs, convey a true sense of their expressions. The illustrations are done in four colors: black, red, light brown, and white. The depictions are expressionist in that arbitrary use of color is used to convey emotion. For example, emotion is seen in the dogs' faces and used to draw attention to a certain area. Another example illustrating expressionism would be the famous painting by Edvard Munch, *The Scream* (1893). *The Scream* and the menacing face of the dog coupled with the harsh bold lines are parallel. Lacy celebrates Mordvinoff's groundbreaking use of color for expressionistic purposes in a children's book as follows:

No other Caldecott Award - winning artist used color in quite the same expressive way for intended effects on an audience as did Nicolas Mordvinoff in the 1952 selection *Finders Keepers*. From sinister outlines of ghostlike figures on a black double-spread title to a skull motif on the back of the book's blood-red jacket, the artwork throughout *Finders Keepers* conveys an appropriate artistic message that the book should not be viewed superficially as another cute or funny dog story for children. (100)

*Finders Keepers*, like *Where the Wild Things Are*, ventures beyond the norm in terms of depictions of characters; both books created some controversy due to this.

Genre: fiction

Subject: dogs, other animals, honesty, trust, character and values, and friendship.

Ages: 3+

1953. *The Biggest Bear*, written and illustrated by Lynd Ward.

The main character, young Johnny Orchard, befriends a bear cub. At first this was fine with his father, which appears to be incongruous, because what appears to be the norm for his father and neighbors is to proudly display bear skins on the exterior of their barns. As the bear grows to full size, the bear becomes a nuisance. Johnny's father explains that the bear needs to go back to live in the woods. Despite Johnny's resistance, he brings the bear back to the woods. However, the bear keeps returning to their house. Johnny's father says there is only one way to solve the problem: Johnny has to kill the bear. Johnny tries to do as his father said but is shown fumbling with the gun. The reader never sees if Johnny is capable of actually shooting the bear because Johnny gets pulled along with the bear as he takes off after the smell of food. They then get caught in a bear trap together. All works out in the end when the bear trappers come and release them. The bear finds a new home in a zoo.

Some landscape illustrations in *The Biggest Bear* are reminiscent of an Ansel Adams print. They often depict a full landscape, showing every possible value in the spectrum of black to white. The graduations of light and dark tones imply texture and contour. Some illustrations consume both pages, underscoring the vastness of the

landscape. Johnny and the bear's placement in the foreground adds to their tentative situation—they seem vulnerable amidst the vastness of the landscape. In contrast, other illustrations depict the main subject with a white background. The single-page illustrations were done with opaque watercolors in brown and black. “Ward composed the whole sequence of pictures before adding in the minimum amount of words to hold it all together” (Lacy 140). This is a perfect example of the text complementing the pictures, which has been seen in other Caldecott illustrators' work.

Ward was strongly influenced by the Canadian backwoods, which he frequently visited almost every year since early childhood. The moral which Ward shows is the grey area between animals' freedom and hunting.

Genre: Youth fiction

Subject: bear, guns, morals, and friendship.

Ages: 5+

1954. *Madeline's Rescue*. Written and illustrated by Ludwig Bemelmans.

All of the Madeline books begin the same way:

“In an old house in Paris

that was covered with vines

lived twelve little girls in two straight lines . . . the smallest one was Madeline.”

This book is the first sequel to *Madeline* (1939). Bemelmans' first book was well received so he went on to write many more sequels in the 1940s and 1950s: *Madeline's Rescue* (1953), *Madeline and the Bad Hat* (1956), *Madeline and the Gypsies* (1959), and *Madeline in London* (1961), as well as “*Madeline's Christmas*, first published in 1956 as

a *McCall's Magazine* insert (Christmas edition of *McCall's* in 1956), then published independently in 1985 ("*Madeline's Christmas* by Ludwig Bemelmans, First Edition").

Ludwig Bemelmans died in 1962 after completing *Madeline's Christmas*. The series continued by his grandson, John Bemelmans Marciano, includes *Madeline in America* (1999), *Madeline Says Merci* (2001), *Madeline Loves Animals* (2005), *Madeline and the Cats of Rome* (2008), *Madeline at the White House* (2011), and *Madeline and the Old House in Paris* (2013).

*Madeline's Rescue* in of itself is a perfect example of what winning a Caldecott Medal did for the illustrator (and his grandson). *Madeline* has spawned numerous sequels. It has also become a merchandising giant, selling toys made in the likeness of the characters. Items in the *Madeline* line have included *Madeline* seasonal dolls, Scholastic Book Video Series, CDs, and an animated *Madeline* series made for television. *Madeline* has been adapted for the stage and television, and also came to the big screen in 1998 with Oscar-winner Frances McDormand as Miss Clavel.

In *Madeline's Rescue*, *Madeline* falls into the Seine River in France and is saved by a dog. The little girls beg Miss Clavel to keep the dog. They do and name her Genevieve. Trouble occurs when Lord Cucuface, the landlord of the boarding school (a great name, which children surely love), removes the dog. The dog returns, and the girls fight over who gets to sleep with Genevieve. The problem is solved when Genevieve gives birth to eleven puppies. The following excerpt from Lacy's book explains Bemelmans' inspiration for Genevieve's character:

As he painted along the Seine one day, a dog retrieved an artificial leg floating down the river, inspiring the story line and the first few illustrations in *Rescue*. In

the Fauvist tradition of crude and impulsively bright colors by such turn-of-the-century artists as Maurice de Vlaminck and Andre Derain, Bemelmans River Seine is bright yellow or dull green or even red (on the cover of early editions), and his sun-drenched sky in the first watercolor paintings is likewise red or yellow. (99)

It is said that Bemelmans began writing the story on the back of a restaurant menu. Bemelmans writes, ““If you know the artist, you will see him always in his pictures, even if they be landscapes”” (qtd. in Galbraith). Much of his life is incorporated into the story of the *Madeline* books. Bemelmans’ mother attended a convent school, where little beds were lined up in straight rows and the bedroom included a long table with basins for washing. Bemelmans also had attended a boarding school as a child; the students walked in two straight lines, which is reflected in the *Madeline* books. While he was vacationing in France as a boy with his family, he had a biking accident and was brought to the hospital. Above his hospital bed there was crack in the ceiling that resembled a rabbit. In the room across the hall was a young girl who had her appendix removed. She proudly stood on her bed to show Bemelmans her scar. “And so Madeline was born,” Bemelmans revealed, “or rather appeared by her own decision” (Bemelmans 274).

A book’s power to influence a child is limitless. Anna Quindlen is an American author, journalist, and columnist. Some of her books include *Alternate Side* (2018), *Still Life with Bread Crumbs* (2014), and *A Short Guide to a Happy Life* (2000). She also won the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary in 1992. Quindlen wrote in November 1993 her reflections on Madeline, revealing that Madeline is in the tradition of other strong female



characters in children's literature: "The role of gutsy girls in children's literature should never be discounted, from Anne Shirley of the Green Gables series to Jo March in Little Women. When I was a girl, girl characters were outspoken, smart, and strong were the primary way I found to define and discover myself and all the ways in which I felt different from standard notions of femininity" (10). Quindlen added that these books endure because they understand children's feelings; what they hope for, desire and fear.

Judy Blume also cherished Bemelmans' *Madeline*, "who can easily be seen as an inspiration for some of her own characters" (Eccleshare 9). Judy Blume reviews *Madeline* in *1001 Children's Books You Must Read Before You Grow Up*"

"When I was small my mother took me to the library in Elizabeth, New Jersey, where I would sit on the floor and browse among the books. I not only liked the pictures and the stories but the feel and the smell of the books themselves. It was here that I discovered *Madeline* by Ludwig Bemelmans. I loved that book! I loved it so much that I hid it in my kitchen toy drawer so my mother would not be able to return it to the library. Even after several overdue notices came, I didn't tell my mother where the book was. If only I had asked, I am sure she would have bought me my own copy but I didn't know that was a possibility then. I thought the copy I had hidden was the only copy in the whole world. I knew it was wrong to hide the book but there was no way I was going to part with *Madeline*. Many years have passed since I hid that copy of *Madeline* but I can still recite the story by heart. And when my daughter was born *Madeline* was the first book I bought for her. Some books you never forget. Some characters become your friends for life." (qtd. in Eccleshare 78)

Julia Eccleshare describes the significance of the Madeline books to Blume: “This anecdote conjures up the extraordinary force of ‘wanting’—an emotion too direct even to be called desire—that childhood books can evoke” (78). Judy Blume has said that as a child, she was small and scared of everything. Perhaps this is an aspect of why Madeline resonated for her: Madeline was small but brave.

*Madeline’s Rescue* has endured over time and is still very current. Bemelmans’ timeless prose is so catchy with its use of rhyme and meter. There is continuity in every Madeline story with the same use of characters, as well as local and repetitive prose that rolls off one’s tongue. It is set in picturesque France—city streets, markets, architecture, and the Eiffel Tower feature prominently. Its engaging characters all have such colorful personalities: Madeline; Pepito; Miss Clavel; and last but not least the head of the board of trustees, Lord Cucuface. Their dog, Genevieve, a main character in this story, is also a very colorful character. The uniqueness of Lord Cucuface’s name in and of itself is sure to be remembered by every child. These colorful characters, along with brilliant prose, a feisty Madeline, and perfectly matched illustrations all work in perfect unison.

The style and media used in *Madeline’s Rescue* are Expressionist and Impressionist, in that the strokes of the brush are visible, conveying a sense of movement through the subjects; Miss Clavel dashes as the text reads, “In the middle of the night Miss Clavel turned on her light and said, ‘Something is not right!’ Miss Clavel ran fast and faster, and afraid of a disaster” (this is often said in the Madeline books). The brush strokes also show elements of Naïve Cartoon Art (a simple style that allows the illustrator to use a technique of choice that is not learned but is his own). Bemelmans was self-taught and did not consider himself an artist. He devised the techniques seen in his

Madeline series. The pages often alternate, with full color spreads frequently opposite black and white illustrations with a complete yellow background. He used ink, watercolor, and bold marks in his art; this signature technique allows the reader to focus on the characters.

Bemelmans' art can be seen at the Carlyle Hotel in New York City at the Bemelmans Bar, named after him. He painted large-scale murals on the walls, which are his only artwork on display to the public. The Carlyle Hotel uses Bemelmans' artwork as a drawing point, describing it thus: "The Carlyle Hotel's sophisticated, upscale piano bar, adorned with Ludwig Bemelmans' famed murals" ("Bemelmans Bar"). Of course, the famed twelve little girls in two straight lines are depicted, among other drawings. "Rather than be paid for his art," the hotel website reveals, "Bemelmans exchanged his work for a year and a half of accommodations at the Carlyle for himself and his family" ("Bemelmans Bar"). Bemelmans also left his mark on the yacht of Aristotle Onassis, as Onassis hired Bemelmans to paint his daughter's room on his yacht.

Genre: youth fiction, rhythmic text

Subject: strong girl character, Paris, French culture: tour of Paris, boarding school, and dog.

Age: 4+

1955. *Cinderella or the Little Glass Slipper*. Illustrated and translated into English by Marcia Brown, written in French by Charles Perrault.

"When I was a child, thinking that I would like one day to illustrate books for children, I always thought of the fairy tales that I loved," stated Marcia Brown in

*“Integrity and Intuition,”* her Caldecott acceptance speech for *Cinderella* (qtd. in Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 13).

This Cinderella version has been translated from the story told by the Frenchman Charles Perrault. This version of Cinderella has the same wicked sisters, fairy godmother and prince as the traditional Cinderella; however, this Cinderella forgives her mean stepsisters and finds them suitors. There is variation in the Perrault, Grimm, and Disney versions of Cinderella.

The illustration media used are gouache, crayon, watercolor, and ink. Some pictures have more color, creating an opaque look and accenting the drama and importance of the text. The technique has cultural undertones fitting to the subject: “Frivolous and frosty style considered appropriately French is used by Brown in Cinderella” (Lacy 101).

For three months Brown researched libraries and museums, filling sketchbooks with drawings of hats, coats, hairstyles, fountains, chairs, beds, clocks, and slippers. She researched not only the items themselves but wanted to know how Cinderella and her fellow characters would have dressed and moved (Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 15).

In Brown’s creative process, she started out with very rough sketches, calling this her trial and error process. During this process her illustrations grew and became more polished; however, she did not want them to look too refined as they would in a photograph. Brown said, “That to me is death. There always has to be that little outlet for the imagination” (Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 15).

Brown’s retelling of fairy tales came to be because she felt that there were no good picture-book versions of the stories that she loved as a child. The 1940s fairy-tale

books were just starting to come back after years of neglect. In addition to *Cinderella*, she retold and illustrated *Puss in Boots* (1952) and *The Steadfast Tin Soldier* (1953).

During the 1950s, illustrated books were usually printed using no more than four standard colors of ink: yellow, blue, red, and black. Irrespective of the varied colors presented in the art, they all derive from the four given colors. Brown herself figured out exactly what combinations and proportions of yellow, blue, red, and black to mix as opposed to the standard method of using a special camera that determined the color combinations. Brown's process of "pre-separating" the colors was surely time consuming and tricky (Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 17).

Brown went on to receive two more Caldecott Awards for *Once a Mouse* (1961) and *Shadow* (1982). Brown also wrote the acclaimed books *The Runaway Bunny* (1942) and *Goodnight Moon* (1947).

After getting home from dinner one night, Brown got a call from her editor, Alice Dalgliesh, notifying her that *Cinderella* had won the Caldecott. In the 1950s the protocol was for the recipient to keep her winning a secret for a whole month until the official announcement of the award was made in March. Winning the Caldecott Award assured strong sales for her book and gave her enough financial freedom to go to Europe for a year and half. There she drew, painted, visited museums, and soaked up the aesthetics of France, Germany, Holland, and England. Brown died at age 96 from an embolism during a routine surgery. Many manuscripts were left behind that have subsequently been published.

Brown left a legacy, as she was integral to children's literature: "Brown practically invented the genre of picture books for very young children, as it had not

existed before she began. This whole body of literature is for very young children, including board books and books with very few words, involving a kind of repetition or game playing that is attributed to her” (Cook).

Genre: Fairy tale

Subject: Cinderella

Age: 3+

1956. *Frog Went A-Courtin’*. Illustrated by Feodor Rojankovsky, retold by John Langstaff.

*Frog Went A-Courtin’* is based on a series of events. A frog courts a mouse and then they marry. Their forest friends pitch in to help with the wedding, one way or another, except for Old Tom Cat. He crashes the party and puts an end to the festivities. *Frog Went A-Courtin’* is based on a 400-year-old story that has been passed down from generation to generation. This story, written in verse, turned into an old Scottish song originally called “The Frog Came to the Myl Dur.”

Rojankovsky came to the United States after World War II as an illustrator for the Artists and Writers Guild. Since his childhood days in Russia, he had an uncommonly strong attachment to nature and animals.

The illustrations in this book are rich in color and form; some are depicted in Pointillism style (in the manner of George Seurat). Lacy explains: “Rojankovsky could uncannily express humor through color and shape in charming images that live in the hearts of children long after they are children no more” (142). The format of the rhyming

text is always placed at the bottom of the page, except in two wordless double-page spreads.

Genre: Comedy, mythology/folktale, and folk artist

Subject: frogs, other animals, romance

Age: 4+

1957. *A Tree Is Nice*. Illustrated by Marc Simont, written by Janice Udry.

This story reveals the many virtues of an ordinary tree and all it has to offer. It provides shade, one can climb it, one can put a swing on a branch, birds build nests on it, children can play in the fallen leaves, and it provides shelter for animals. *A Tree Is Nice* shows the value of, and brings forth respect to common things in the environment. The black and white illustrations alternate with colored ones; for example, the beauty of the bright fall is depicted with the yellows, reds, and oranges. The watercolor illustrations complement the simplicity of the poetic text.

*A Tree Is Nice*, *Time of Wonder* (the 1958 Caldecott winner), and *The Little Island* (the 1947 Caldecott winner) are all studies of nature. *A Tree Is Nice* is brief in text which would sustain interest for a younger child, in contrast to McCloskey's *Time of Wonder*, which is lengthy and consists of sixty-four pages that would be more appropriate for an older child's attention span. *The Little Island* does not show any people, which does not detract from the book, for the illustrations of the animated fish, cat, and beautiful seascapes are picturesque. On the other hand, *A Tree Is Nice*'s illustrations depict people involved in various activities and also show cows depicted lying under a tree for shade. All books involve nature and reverence for land and are perfect for use by parents and

teachers alike.

In a retrospective essay about the Caldecott Medal-winning books from 1956 to 1965, Norma R. Fryatt wrote about *A Tree Is Nice*, “the book becomes one of the most convincing sermons on conservation yet done for young children” (272).

Genre: Juvenile non-fiction

Subject: trees, respect for nature and trees, children playing, beauty in the everyday world

Age: 4+

1958. *Time of Wonder*. By Robert McCloskey.

This book is similar to *The Little Island*, in that the simplistic beauty of island life is depicted, though *Time of Wonder* involves a family’s summer vacation on a Maine island overlooking Penobscot Bay and is not focused only on nature. The girl in the story describes the joys of her everyday adventures. The story also explains what takes place when a hurricane comes, and the people and animals prepare. Some picturesque illustrations are of seascapes and landscapes, while others render animals and people. The authenticity of island life is accurately depicted in that McCloskey lived most of his life on an island (the authenticity of his pictures and words reflect his life on Maine Island that figures so prominently in many of his books). McCloskey often incorporated his family members in his books, even Mozzarella the cat.

*Time of Wonder* is a perfect seasonal book to utilize while also teaching about being proactive about hurricanes. It also would be well received by primary school children, for “*Time of Wonder* is most successful when it is presented as a family story: as we have seen, the family is of utmost importance to youngsters aged four to seven”



(Lacy 33).

The Caldecott illustrations bestow many virtues, such as exposing young readers to art. McCloskey's outdoor illustrations are said to be more impressionistic in their portrayal of color and light and likened to the work of famous artists Camille Pissarro, Claude Monet, and Alfred Sisley, leaders in the nineteenth century Impressionist movement:

Impressionism, a French nineteenth century art movement, which tried to use contemporary scientific research into the physics of color to achieve a more exact representation of color and tone. The majority of the Impressionists apply paint in small touches of pure color rather than broader, blended strokes, thus making pictures, which seemed dazzlingly brighter than those of contemporary salon artists. They also believed in painting out of doors, and in trying to catch a particular fleeting impression of color and light rather than making a synthesis in the studio. (Lucie-Smith 103)

As evidenced by his two Caldecott Award medals and Caldecott Honor Awards, Robert McCloskey is one of the most beloved American children's authors of all. His books, which include *Make Way for Ducklings*, 1941 Caldecott Medal Award; *Blueberries for Sal*, 1949 Caldecott Honor Award; *One Morning in Maine*, 1952 Caldecott Honor Award; and *Time of Wonder*, 1958 Caldecott Medal award, are all twentieth-century icons.

In October 2016, The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Massachusetts displayed a McCloskey exhibit "Americana on Parade: The Art of Robert McCloskey." In celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Robert McCloskey's *Make Way for*

*Ducklings* (1941), The Carle Museum organized a retrospective highlighting much of the original art from *Make Way for Ducklings*. While significant emphasis centered on *Make Way for Ducklings*, the exhibition considered McCloskey's entire career ranging from his early to later publications: *Lentil* (1940), *Homer Price* (1942), *Blueberries for Sal* (1948), *Centerburg Tale* (1951), and *Time of Wonder* (1957).

Fortunately for the children's literary world, Robert McCloskey did turn to children's literature, as it was by chance because his earlier interests were in the electrical and mechanical fields.

It is apparent that Robert McCloskey was a major force in twentieth-century picture book art. In 2011, Robert McCloskey received the lifetime achievement award from the Society of Illustrators in New York, NY. The Society of Illustrators describes the award in this way:

The Lifetime Achievement Awards were established in 2005 by past chairs of The Original Art. Nominees must be judged to have a body of work that documents an innovative and pioneering contribution to the field of children's book illustration, and final selection is made by artists whose work has been juried into the previous year's show. Two awards are given annually: one posthumously and one to a living illustrator. ("Lifetime Achievement")

In April 2000, he was he was named a Living Legend by the Library of Congress ("Awards and Honors").

In 1999, the Maine Library Association created the Katahdin Award which recognizes an outstanding body of work of children's literature in Maine. The Katahdin Award is designed to honor a living Maine author and/or illustrator. An author or

illustrator is considered a resident if he or she was born in the state or currently resides in Maine for all or part of the year. This award may be given annually, but may not necessarily be given each year. Robert McCloskey received the award in 1999—the year in which the award was instituted (“Katahdin Award History”). The Lupine Award started in 1989 and also honors Maine authors and/or illustrators, it has similar qualifications as the Katahdin Award designed to honor a living author or illustrator who is a resident of Maine, or who has created a work whose focus is Maine, as shown through the work’s characterization and plot. An author or illustrator is considered a resident if he or she was born in the state or currently resides in Maine for all or part of the year. *Miss Rumphius* by Clooney was the inspiration for this award. Like the Caldecott Award, the Lupine Award has a winner and honor books. *Snowflake Bentley* (1998) also received the Lupine Award (“Lupine Award History”).

McCloskey’s daughter, Jane, published *Robert McCloskey: A Private Life in Words and Pictures*. This personal memoir by his daughter details growing up with her father. Other than his daughter’s memoir, little is known of McCloskey’s life. Jane describes him as follows, “He was a shy, quiet man, reluctant to talk about himself or his work. His art spoke for him” (*Robert McCloskey: A Private Life in Words and Pictures*).

Genre: Drama, setting realistic

Subject: family, summer vacation, Maine the island, nature, ocean, storms, seasons, beauty

Age: 3+

1959. *Chanticleer and the Fox*. Illustrated by Barbara Cooney, adapted by Barbara Cooney from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

Chanticleer is a happy rooster who is caught off guard when a sly fox tricks him by flattery with the intent to capture him. Chanticleer, in turn, outwits the fox and escapes. This sequential turn of events shows creative problem-solving, and an awareness of a character's sincerity or lack of it. This lesson will benefit young children, as they tend to be innocent and take what others say at face value. Chanticleer is a retelling of one of the *Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer.

The illustrations use strategic placement of vibrant colors with a plain white background, which accentuates the image at hand. The illustrations are done in a scratchboard technique that Cooney had been using for over twenty years. It involves placing white clay on a hard surface and spreading thick black ink that makes the scratchboard. The artist uses a sharp tool to make thousands of small cuts in the top layer. With each cut of the black ink, the white clay shows through. To finish the piece, the artist may add different colors. This art process is very labor intensive.

“In Barbara Cooney's Caldecott acceptance speech, she said the following:

I believe that children in this country need a more robust literary diet than they are getting. . . . It does not hurt them to read about good and evil, love and hate, life and death. Nor do I think they should only read about things that they understand . . . . For myself, I will never talk down to, or draw down to, children.” (qtd. in Klonsky)

Up until this time, she and Sendak (*Where the Wild Things Are*, 1964) were the only ones

to challenge the landscape of the stories norm in the text and illustrations. In Barbara Cooney's Caldecott Award acceptance speech, she further explained her philosophy in writing children's books:

"How many children will know that the magpie sitting in my pollarded willow in *Chanticleer and the fox* is an evil omen? How many children will realize that every flower and grass in the book grew in Chaucer's Time in England? How many children will know or care? Maybe not a single one. Still I keep piling it on. Detail after detail. Who am I pleasing—beside myself? I don't know. Yet if I put enough in my pictures, there may be something for everyone. Not all will be understood but some will be understood now and maybe more later."

(qtd. in Lipson)

Cooney won the Caldecott twice: 1958 for *Chanticleer and the Fox* and in 1980 for McDonald Hall's *Ox-Cart Man*. In addition, Cooney received many honorary degrees and won the American Book Award for *Miss Rumphius* in 1983. *Miss Rumphius* was the inspiration for the Lupine Award. Like the Caldecott Award, the Lupine Award has a winner and honor books. *Snowflake Bentley* (1999 Caldecott Medal winner) also received the Lupine Award. ("Lupine Award History")

Cooney's work is much admired for its historical detail and accuracy. *Ox-Cart Man*'s depictions of New Hampshire's pastoral and Portsmouth market and *Chanticleer and the Fox*'s costumes, plants, and household subjects are in keeping with a fourteenth-century English setting. Her other non-Caldecott books also depict, with accuracy, details ranging from all of the elements from the embroidery on Elizabeth Roosevelt's baptismal gown (*Eleanor*) to Finnish Folklore (*Louhi, Witch of North Farm*) (Lacy 140).

Genre: Youth fiction, folk tale

Subject: Canterbury Tales, trust, honesty, not to trick others, moral

Age: 4+

### **Caldecott Books—1960s**

The Caldecotts of the 1960s were much more over-the-top than were their predecessors. They were sophisticated, provided more abstraction and higher meaning, and were not as “G-rated” as their predecessors. Further, this decade’s Caldecott books included several “game changers” from a Caldecott perspective, which caused children to use more critical thinking. Sometimes characters were not, in reality, as presented. Anti-war themes were addressed during this decade which saw the rise of the Vietnam War. Lessons about lying with some moralistic folk-tale stories, along with the traditional simplistic stories reminiscent of those of the 1930s and 1940s still made their way into the pantheon during this decade of change. The most distinctive and paradigm-shifting Caldecott book of the 1960s was Maurice Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are*, which addressed a child’s anger and that cruelty does exist in childhood. He and Cooney (1959) did not want to portray idealized versions of youth to children. Further, Ezra Jack Keats’ groundbreaking *The Snowy Day* highlighted ongoing social issues of this tumultuous decade.

1960. *Nine Days to Christmas*. Illustrated by Marie Hall Ets, written by Aurora Labastida.

Five-year-old Ceci has been waiting for the day when she is finally old enough to

have her own Posada (Las Posadas). This festive nine-day (December 16-24) Mexican tradition commemorates the trek of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. In preparation for the festival, she eagerly picks her first star-shaped pinata, which is emblematic of the star that was above the stable where the baby Jesus was born. Even though her pinata is filled with treats, Ceci doesn't want to break it as tradition would have.

The Mexican culture is presented in this book in many ways: dress, food, customs (piñata), and religion. The tri-color illustrations are accented with strategic splashes of bright pinks, reds, and yellows, contrasted against the pale monochromatic sepia-like background.

Marie Hall Ets was impassioned about depicting the culture with accuracy and determined to eliminate stereotyping:

The 1960 Caldecott winner, *Nine Days to Christmas*, is the most realistic of all the Caldecotts. Little Ceci's first Christmas Posada and piñata are illustrated by Marie Hall Ets, who wrote the text with Mexico City children's librarian Aurora Labastida. Determined to dispel Americans' stereotypical image of their Mexican neighbors as poor village Indians, Ets employed a natural system of proportion sensitivity and sympathy in quick recordings of arrested moments. Real people and events were observed on bustling city streets, markets, kindergartens, and homes. (Lacy 174)

Though this story was written almost sixty years ago, *Nine Days to Christmas* still remains fresh and relevant, for it is timeless and the custom portrayed celebrates true matters of the heart and faith. Its goal of breaking down stereotypes has become a main theme in postmodernity.

Genre: drama, setting is historical, and the heritage is Hispanic/Latino.

Subject: Mexican culture, Posada, people, landscape, streets, piñata, and Christmas.

Age: 4+

1961. *Baboushka and The Three Kings*. Illustrated by Nicholas Sidjakov, written by Ruth Robbins.

*Baboushka and the Three Kings* is a Russian tale about a woman who receives a knock on her door by three strange men (3 kings); they invite Baboushka to come with them as they are following a star to see the newborn child. She replies that it is too cold and retreats inside her warm house. Shortly after they leave, she realizes she should have gone with them, and Baboushka begins her search across the land from village to village to find them. Legend has it that Baboushka searches year after year at this time of year.

There are many philosophical and religious connotations to this story. For example, Baboushka realized, after the fact, that she missed an opportunity—that she had been shown the “truth”—and continues into the future with this awareness looking to find it. The moral could be “opportunity knocks but once.” Further, the origin of the story as a Russian tale brought discussion about an area in the USSR into discussion among children at the height of the Cold War. Perhaps this book was inviting a continued breakdown of stereotypes, as was its Caldecott-winning predecessor, *Nine Days to Christmas*.

The illustrations of the people depicted are somewhat flattened out and stylized, reminiscent of a primitive face as in Picasso’s early Cubism. In some of the illustrations, the people’s faces are turned sideways while their eyes face front. Five colors are



repeatedly used: black, green, blue, yellow, and red-orange. The thick black linear lines are reminiscent of stained-glass windows and the abstraction of Egyptian Murals and Byzantine faces. These depictions give the book a religious look, and readers can imagine that they are reading from an illustrated manuscript from the Middle Ages.

Genre: Russian folktale, the setting is Historical, and the heritage is European

Subject: Judeo-Christian religion, unreflective/don't think of consequences of actions

Age: 4+

1962. *Once a Mouse*. Retold and illustrated by Marcia Brown.

*Once A Mouse* is an ancient Indian fable celebrating the virtues of humility and gratefulness. A mystic hermit sits and ponders the abstract issues of life when he sees a mouse in distress and rescues it. One thing leads to another and to protect the mouse from a crow attack he transforms the mouse into a tiger. As the story continues, the mystic sees that the tiger is using his strength, while unwisely not possessing any humility or gratitude. The hermit intuitively understands the mindset of the lion's plan to eat him; therefore, he changes the tiger back to a mouse. The hermit, who possesses this wisdom, feels that strength comes primarily from within and not just from the outside.

The rhythmic wood cut illustrations consisting of harsh bold lines add to the primitiveness of the story. The use of the same three strategic colors over and over creates unity and familiarity of characters for the child.

Brown also won a Caldecott Medal in 1955 for *Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper* (which she translated from Charles Perrault's version), and in 1983 for *Shadow* (her translation and adaptation of "La Feticheuse," a mystical poem by Blaise Cendrars).

Brown was one of only two artists—the other being David Wiesner—to receive the Caldecott Medal three times. She also illustrated six Caldecott Honor Books, among them *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*, an adaptation of the Hans Christian Andersen story; *Puss in Boots*, from Perrault; and *Stone Soup*. She also won the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award for her contributions to children’s literature. As an illustrator, she employed a diverse range of styles and media, including woodcuts, collage, pen and ink drawings, watercolors and gouache.

Brown felt that books for younger children were more attractive than the dullness of books created for older children. Her choice of aesthetics is widely recognized, as Brown was one of the country’s most admired picture-book artists (Fox). “‘The Heritage of childhood is the sense of life bequeathed to it by the folk wisdom of the ages,’” she said. “‘It is a privilege to pass these truths on to children who have a right to the fullest expression we can give them’” (qtd. in Fox).

Genre: fable

Subject: Indian fable, humility, animals, moral character

Age: 4+

1963. *The Snowy Day*. Written and illustrated by Ezra Jack Keats.

This story chronicles the solitary time of a young African American boy, Peter, as he sets out to play for the first time in new falling snow. He draws in the snow with a stick, makes a snowman, makes a snow angel, pretends to be a mountain climber, and leaves his tracks behind.

Peter exemplifies all the delights that a child feels while playing in the season’s

first snow. This book brings to mind a child's innocence and ability to be in the moment of life. Everyone must have, at some point, witnessed a small child outside in the snow sticking his or her tongue out in the hope of catching a snowflake.

Keats tapped into the child's ability of being in the moment and the magic of a child's first snowfall of the season. "I wanted to convey the joy of being a little boy alive on a certain kind of day—of being for that moment. The air is cold, you touch the snow, aware of the things to which all children are so open" (Keats, "Autobiographical Excerpts" 132-33). It seems likely that parents, too, when reading this book to their child feel a nostalgia for the carefreeness and wonderment of their youth. Perhaps, when an adult reads books that exemplify this unadulterated freeness and of being present in the moment, he or she is reminded to slow down in the adult world. After all, some books are purchased or picked from the library by the adult and not the child.

Keats noted that the source of the storyline came from his childhood memories of snowy days in Brooklyn. He wanted to capture the magic of a child's first snowfall: an experience that is universal to all children, regardless of race (Keats, "Autobiographical Excerpts" 132-33). Books need to be able to connect with a wide audience, and this is what Keats did as he had the foresight to recognize that children of color also need to be represented.

The illustrations in this book resemble a torn paper effect. They are mostly flat (no variation of color), which lends to a one-dimensional look. Peter stands out in contrast to the white backdrop of snow with his red parka. *Wolf in the Snow's* (2018) little boy in a red parka has been compared to Peter.

Keats had his own art technique (as many artists do), which he explains in his

Caldecott Award speech:

“Now for the technique - I had no idea as to how the book would be illustrated, except that I wanted to add a few bits of patterned paper to supplement the painting . . . .

The mother’s dress is made of a kind of oil cloth used for lining cupboards. I made a big sheet of snow-texture by rolling white paint over wet inks on paper and achieved the effect of snow flakes by cutting patterns out of gum erasers, dipping them into paint, and then stamping them onto the pages. The gray background for the pages where Peter goes to sleep was made by splattering Indian ink with a toothbrush.” (qtd. in “Ezra Jack Keats”)

Keats’s techniques combine to create a child-friendly picture. Peter and the snow look as if they were created by a primary grade student. This naivete resembles their art, making the book seem familiar and relatable. Keats describes his collage method as:

“A pattern that has its own character, when used in combination with other patterns, become something else. . . . [For example,] a decorative paper becomes a room; flat shapes of space and design become buildings, snow, a pillow, and pajamas on a boy. . . . No definition of lying or shading shows where the pillow neither meets the bed, nor is the edge of the bed cover defined. The viewer makes it round, gives its space, follows the implications” (qtd. in Hammond and Nordstrom 191).

He further explains that collage evokes an immediate sensory response. Because of this quality it has special appeal for children to experience the world in this immediate way (Keats, “On Collage”).

A finished product of art is deceiving, in that it appears to be seamlessly executed. The viewer is unaware of the artist's thought process, the amount of research, the placement of strategic art used, and the skills involved. As stated in the Preface of this dissertation, "A picture is something that requires as much knavery, trickery, and deceit as the perpetration of a crime" (Edgar Degas, qtd. in Graham-Dixon). Keats' work bears out this idea: while his illustrations look simple, they are painstakingly designed to create their childlike effect.

This book was the first Caldecott Medal book to have an African American as a main character. The next Caldecott to have an African American as a main character was *The Smoky Night* in 1995. The first African American Caldecott illustrator was Leo Dillon for *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* in 1976, and the first African American author/illustrator was Jerry Pinkney for *The Lion and The Mouse*, a wordless book from 2010.

Keats broke ground by featuring African Americans in award-winning picture books. Keats was not African American; at the time when he was writing and illustrating, his racial difference from his subjects generated some criticism. Until the 1960s, children's literature was generally an all-white world. In 1941, the first appearance of a black person in a Caldecott was shown in *They Were Strong and Good*. Keats is known for writing picture books that show diversity in race and showing urban settings.

Keats' first children's picture book was *My Dog is Lost!* (1960), depicting a young Puerto Rican child (Juanito) searching for his dog. Two years later came *The Snowy Day* (1962), one of the most famous children's books ever published in the United States, which took inspiration from a group of photos in Life magazine that showed a

young African American child about to receive an injection.

About his decision to portray children of color, Keats once wrote, ““None of the manuscripts I’d been illustrating featured any black kids—except for token blacks in the background. My book would have him there simply because he should have been there all along”” (qtd. in “Ezra Jack Keats”).

Keats’ work was groundbreaking for two reasons: it was the first picture book to feature a black child, and its artwork was in collage style. Keats’ legacy is long and prolific:

Keats wrote and illustrated more than 85 books for children. His illustrations show uniqueness in their simplicity and richness of color which he achieved through collage and gouache paint. He depicts “fine art” styles such as Cubism and abstraction. Keats was the first artist to design a set of greeting cards for UNICEF, and he was the first children’s book author/ illustrator asked to donate his papers to Harvard. (“Ezra Jack Keats”)

Keats’ art has been exhibited at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Massachusetts. There is also a private foundation in his name located in Brooklyn, New York. In 2012 The Jewish Museum in New York mounted an exhibition of Keats’ work. This first major exhibition paying tribute to Keats took place during the fiftieth anniversary of *The Snowy Day*. The exhibition was “a retrospective [that] featured original artwork and personal papers from the Keats Archive and delves into Keats’ background, beliefs, inventiveness and influence” (“The Snowy Day and the Art of Ezra Jack Keats”).

*The Snowy Day*’s popularity is summarized in the following:

*The Snowy Day* has been one of the Caldecott collection's most popular titles since its publication over two decades ago. It differs in style from the other Caldecott two snow books; *White Snow*, *Bright Snow* (1948) and *The Big Snow* (1949) and from all other award winners that went before. Keats collage style played an important part in promoting paper collage as an effective art technique for picture books. His collages are reminiscent of cutouts by Henri Matisse in their stark simplicity, sinuous lines, and organic shapes that are truly biomorphic-reflections of real life rather than ideal forms that can be broken down into their precise parts. (Lacy 163)

The book's popularity has remained constant throughout the years, inspiring Amazon to release *The Snowy Day*, an award-winning movie, in 2016.

*The Snowy Day* was published in 1962, following the year Martin Luther King delivered his "I Have A Dream" speech. The power a person can have in influencing others may never be known, but in this case Keats had to have felt immensely proud for the culmination of these three events, the I Have a Dream speech, putting a black child as a main character in a mainstream book, and winning the Caldecott Medal for a book of this subject at this pivotal time in American history.

Peter appears in other Keats books: *Whistle for Willie* (1964), *Peter's Chair* (1967), *A Letter to Amy* (1968), and *Goggles* (1998). *A Poem for Peter: The Story of Ezra Jack Keats and the Creation of The Snowy Day* was written by Andrea Davis Pinkney about Ezra. Some of the marketing includes a plush, fifteen-inch "*The Snowy Day* doll" to accompany *The Snowy Day* book.

Keats' work paved the way for the rightful inclusion of blacks in Caldecott books.

Later, other Caldecott books would be associated with the African American experience. In 1982, *Shadow* by Marcia Brown shared African storytellers and shamans' stories. With *Smoky Night* published in 1995, Leo Dillon became the first African American Caldecott Medal winner for *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* in 1976. *A Story, A Story* in 1970 and *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat* in 2017 featured characters of African descent.

In spite of the progress made, “More than half a century later, that world hasn’t arrived—not even in children’s books, showing brown children are still far underrepresented, relative to their percentage of the population. Peter is still, in a sense, a *figure* out of the dream. But those [Forever] stamps will remind us that the dream stands strong” (Russo). In her article in *The Times*, Maria Russo refers to the fact that in October 2017, The United States Postal Service issued four stamps, part of the “Forever” series, featuring Peter in his red parka. The stamps, along with the Caldecott, will immortalize Peter and the symbolism that he represents. More than likely, Peter in the red parka will be remembered synonymously with the groundbreaking author/illustrator, Ezra Jack Keats.

Keats is one of the most influential authors/illustrators of the twentieth century and has played a major role in the history of children’s books. Similar to Keats, Maurice Sendak (the winner of the Caldecott Medal in 1964) has also had a strong effect on children’s literature. 1963 was a pivotal political time with the following news events occurring besides Ezra’s victory: Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his *I Have a Dream* speech and President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Therefore, Peter from *The Snowy Day* became part of the bigger political whole. *The Snowy Day* is included on The



New York Public Library’s list of the 100 most important Children’s Books of the twentieth century (“100 Great Children’s Books”). Based on the cultural work it did in its time and the important effect it continues to have on children and adults today, it is clear why this was a most appropriate choice.

Genre: fiction

Subject: snow, play, African American boy

Age: 3+

1964. *Where the Wild Things Are*. Written and illustrated by Maurice Sendak.

Maurice Sendak, in his Caldecott acceptance speech, said, “*Where the Wild Things Are* was not meant to please everybody—only children” (*Caldecott & Co.* 154).

In *Where the Wild Things Are* little Max is sent to his room for being naughty. Magically, a private boat appears, and he is escorted to a magical place *Where the Wild Things Are*. When there, he becomes King of the Wild Things with the ability to tame the Wild Things. Sendak’s choice of medium—India ink lines over tempera paint—makes for an edgy, yet imaginative effect. The illustrations of the monsters seem larger-than-life. They consume every emotional space of the page. The illustrations on each page, prominently including the moon, progress in size as the story builds to a place where the wild things are. After Max begins his journey home, the pictures—including the pictures of the moon—decrease in size. Max represents every child in that their imagination has the ability to take them where they want to go.

Sendak expressed in many venues that he was sickly as a child and gravitated to books and drawings. His childhood illnesses impacted his youth greatly. He spent

hundreds of hours at his bedroom window, sketching neighborhood children at play. He recalls, ““When I wanted to go out and do something, my father would say: ‘You’ll catch a cold.’ And I did... I did whatever he told me”” (qtd. in Cott). During his childhood, Sendak’s drawings became his outlet. “I sketched and listened, and those notebooks became the fertile field of my work later on. There is not a book that I have written or a picture I have drawn that does not, in some way, owe them its existence” (*Caldecott & Co.* 150). Regarding his influences, Sendak said, ““I remember other things people don’t recall: the sound and feelings and images—the emotional quality—of particular moments in childhood”” (qtd. in “Revolutionised the Picture-Book Narrative”).

Sendak was criticized initially:

Some critics, including the child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, felt the book was too frightening for young children, and the reviewer of the *Journal of Nursery Education* caution, “We should not like to have it left around where a sensitive child might pour over it in the twilight.” Sendak responded in his Caldecott Medal of acceptance speech: Certainly we want to protect our children from new and painful experiences that are beyond their emotional comprehension and that intensify anxiety; and to a point we can prevent premature exposure to such experiences. That is obvious. But what is just as obvious—and what is too often overlooked—is the fact that from their earliest years children live on familiar terms with disrupting emotions, fear and anxiety are an intrinsic part of their everyday lives, they continually cope with frustrations as best as they can. And it is through fantasy that children achieve catharsis. It is the best means they have for taming Wild Things. (Cott)

Sendak's Max acted out like real children do; he was not portrayed in an idealized way, and neither were Sendak's other characters. Sendak changed the landscape in portraying this quality and also in portraying dark, moody illustrations. At the time, this was a shocking contrast to the typical light and happy stories presented. In fact, Sendak's work not only went against the grain but paved the way for other illustrators to do the same: "One of his editors, Michael di Capua, feels Sendak turned the entire tide of what is acceptable, of what it is possible to put it in a children's book illustration" (Braun).

Sendak believed that society purposely deprives children of their most precious quality: the ability to confront their experience intensely, directly, and creatively. Sendak explains, "It is my involvement with this inescapable fact of childhood—the awful vulnerability of children and their struggle to make themselves king of all Wild Things—that gives my work whatever truth and passion it may have" (qtd. in Cott).

*Where the Wild Things Are* represented a turning point in Sendak's career, marking the end of a long apprenticeship. In his 1964 Caldecott Medal speech, Sendak acknowledged that *Where the Wild Things Are* was an immense step forward for him and a critical part of his work.

*Where the Wild Things Are* was turned into a movie in 2009, directed by Spike Jonze. Before the film's release, its distributors were concerned that it was dark in tone. It was unpopular at first with parents, but critics praised the film. The reviewers loved Jonze's strange interpretation, beautiful production design, and melancholy quality. The movie also got the stamp of approval from Sendak: he said that it "has an entire emotional, spiritual, visual life, but warned that there will be controversy" (Roth). The movie garnished A-list actor Tom Hanks, who produced the movie along with Sendak,

Gary Goetzman, John Carls, and Vincent Landa. The late James Gandolfini (also an A-list actor) did the voice of Carol, an impulsive Wild Thing.

To coincide with the film's release, some of the following esoteric merchandise seized the moment to capitalize on the film's fame. Girls Skateboards (which Jonze co-owns) came out with seven pro-model skateboards with *The Wild Things* as the board graphics. Lakai shoes also participated and re-designed most of their pro-model and stock shoes. Ugg Australia also designed limited edition *Where the Wild Things Are* boots.

By 1985, the book *Where the Wild Things Are* had sold 2.5 million copies. This classic will live on in memory of Sendak. His importance as a writer and illustrator of children's books cannot be underestimated:

Maurice Sendak is widely considered the most important children's book artist of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, (*The New York Times*, 2012). Along with receiving the 1964 Caldecott Medal for *Where the Wild Things Are*, Sendak received countless international recognition for his artistry; including sharing the first Astrid Lindgren Memorial prize (2003), the Laura Ingalls Wilder award (1983), the CINE Golden Eagle for best children's film adaptation (1989), the National Medal of the Arts (1996), and remains the only American recipient of the Biennial Hans Christian Andersen Award for Illustration (IBBY 1970) in recognition of his lasting contribution to children's literature. Twenty-two of his titles have been named New York Times best illustrated books of the year. ("Maurice Sendak Exhibition and Sale")

Maurice Sendak exemplifies the potential of mindset: thinking and seeing like a child, with insight and empathy, all of which helped him in making groundbreaking

changes by communicating this into children's literature. Sendak felt that it is through fantasy that children achieve catharsis. The following anecdote demonstrates exactly this:

Not long after *Where the Wild Things Are* was published, Maurice Sendak received a letter from a feisty seven-year-old who wrote, "How much does it cost to get to where the wild things are? My sister and I want to spend the summer there. Please answer soon." Quoting from this letter in the speech he gave on receiving the Caldecott Medal, Sendak said, "I did not answer that question, for I have no doubt that sooner or later they will find their way, free of charge."

(Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 25).

Classic.

Sendak loved music while working, and he constantly changed the recordings until he found the one that represented the appropriate sound for the appropriate colors. Sendak was intimately attuned to all his senses, which manifested in his prolific career.

Sendak drew his inspiration from within, even from his beloved dog Jennie, who appears in every book he produced until she died. Many YouTube interviews of Sendak are worth viewing: "HBO Tell Them Anything You Want: 'A Portrait of Maurice Sendak,'" "Author Maurice Sendak's Favorite Books - Martha Stewart," "Maurice on Death (and Life)," and Mirra Bank's documentary "Last Dance" (on which Sendak collaborated).

Sendak's artistry was prolific even in his early years, from decorating F.A.O. Schwartz's windows to writing and illustrating books, to co/producing the movie *Where the Wild Things Are* and creating sets and costumes for an opera. He started to sell merchandising rights from *Where the Wild Things Are* to a Japanese company called

Medi Com Toys. Other releases include an 8-inch detailed figure of Max in a Wolf suit, and a smaller sized-series of the characters were released as well. In October 2009, a video game based on *Where the Wild Things Are* was released for multiple platforms.

Sendak wrote and/or illustrated over fifty books, either by himself or with others. Sendak published *Caldecott & Co.: Notes on Books & Pictures* (A collection of essays and reviews of writers and illustrators, including Randolph Caldecott). This book is a collection of the authors' and illustrators' critical writings that Sendak admired and that have influenced him.

Sendak was unprecedented in winning of seven Caldecott Honors (runners up): *A Very Special House* (1954); *What Do You Say, Dear?* (1959); *The Moon Jumpers* (1960); *Little Bear's Visit* (1962); *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present* (1963); *In the Night Kitchen* (1971); and *Outside Over There* (1982).

Sendak has basked in much adulation, but judging from the following quote it seems that he was beyond joyful over the Caldecott winning of *Where the Wild Things Are*: ““The moment I heard the news I had won the Caldecott Medal, I rushed off to the florist, bought heaps of roses, and got into a cab. The roses were for my editor, Ursula Nordstrom. At my publisher's office, people were jumping up and down with excitement, and I can remember just hurling roses at Ursula. We were all so happy”” (qtd. in Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 19).

Genre: Picture book

Subject: little boy, fantasy, monsters, anger, adventure, stability in his home

Age: 4+

1965. *May I Bring a Friend?* Illustrated by Beni Montresor, written by Beatrice Schenk De Regniers.

The King and Queen befriend a little boy, whom they invite to have breakfast, lunch, dinner, and teatime. The little boy repeatedly asks the King and Queen if he may bring a friend to dinner. They say yes, and he surprises them each time by bringing a wild animal. Although these get togethers are very unconventional, the King and Queen befriend the animals and visit them all at the zoo.

Montresor immigrated to the United States from Italy in 1960 as a set designer in film and theater. In *May I Bring a Friend*, he brought to picture-book design the magic and glitter of a full-fledged stage production of fantasy: costumes, sets, scenes, lights, and implied action, which were emphasized by choices of colors in theatrical page layouts. Each time the boy comes to visit with a new friend, the celebration is shown in a double-page spread of vivid colors as if the curtain were opening to a new scene (Lacy 99).

The black and white illustrations frequently precede the next page's full-color spread. Colorful expressionist pictures (featuring a purple sky) illustrate the action of the animals at the King and Queen's abode. The whimsical pictures in orange, pink, red, green, purple, and yellow dominate the pages. The illustrations play with scale size and perspective. Any child would surely be amused when viewing a very large, orange, bow-tied hippo, half-sitting on the chair and half on the dining room table in this austere environment. The theme of inclusion continues the trend of the Caldecott books in the 1960s.

In 1966, the Italian government knighted Montresor for his contributions to the arts.

Genre: fiction, rhyming text, picture book

Subject: king and queen, little boy, animals, friendship

Age: 4+

1966. *Always Room for One More*. Illustrated by Nonny Hogrogian, written by Sorche Nic Leodhas.

This traditional Scottish song's repetitive lyrics are catchy, making the reading experience easy; "there's room for one more, always room for one more. Now come away in" (*Always Room for One More*). The repetition prose is predictable, comforting, and reassuring to a child while increasing the child's sight word vocabulary. Lachie McLachlan, a generous Scottish man, is the main character. Although he always has a full house, he never rejects others and offers shelter from the storm.

Lacy celebrates Hogrogian's mastery of the crosshatching technique in illustrating this story of inclusion and hospitality:

*Always Room for One More* perfects the use of line and crosshatching.

Hogrogian's *Always Room for One More* is a fine example of the difference between drawn line itself and the use of color lying affects. The wee house in the heather and the characters in this old Scottish rhyme are all defined by pen-and-ink edge lines for faces and silhouetted by a most dramatic use of hatching (a set of short parallel lines) and crosshatching (a set of lines crossed over by another set at a different angle and in differing amounts to imply texture and contour). In contrast, the tonal background of the heather itself, the hillside, and the stormy



sky are purple, green, and grey chalk and wash dabbed on with paper napkins.

(61)

Hogrogian researched the Scottish culture thoroughly in studying photographs of the people, their traditional costumes, and the cottages of Scotland, and she listened to Scottish music for inspiration while she illustrated. She also pre-separated the art (Lacy 61).

Hogrogian is a two-time Caldecott winner for *Always Room for One More* and, in 1972, *One Fine Day* (her own adaptation of an Armenian folktale).

Genre: Scottish Folk song, rhyming brogue

Subject: friendship, generosity

Age: 4+

1967. *Sam, Bangs, & Moonshine*. Written and illustrated by Evaline Ness.

Sam tells many lies to his friend, Thomas, such as that her dead mother is a mermaid and that an old rug is really a chariot drawn by dragons. Thomas and Bangs (the cat) believe everything that Sam tells them. Sam's moonshine lies (fantasies) almost cost Thomas and Sam's cat, Bangs, his life. The moral of this story teaches that lying can be very dangerous. This story is relatable to a child, as this age group has a vivid imagination. They can be prone to telling "tall tales" as they sometimes have a hard time differentiating truth from fiction. The other unique feature noted is Sam's gender-neutral name, which expands a child's perception of gender names. The illustrations' repeated use of black, white, tan, and golden brown throughout this book could be indicative of the repeated use of lies, as the colors easily fade from one to another—just as the lies are

“shades” of truth and untruth. The illustrations are also drawn from a somewhat abstract perspective, which adds to Sam’s large character. Sam’s naughty character is made even more evident by the drawings.

Ness was a commercial artist, illustrator, and author of several children’s books. She illustrated more than thirty books.

Genre: fiction

Subject: friendship, lies, cause and effect

Age: 5+

1968. *Drummer Hoff*. Illustrated by Ed Emberley, adapted by Barbara Emberley.

This cumulative tale is about seven soldiers who built a cannon named Sultan. The story is very catchy in declaratives; “Captain Bammer brought the rammer, Sargent Chowder brought the powder, Corporal Farrell brought the barrel, Private Parriage brought the carriage, but Drummer Hoff fired it off” (Emberley). This build-up of prose creates anticipation towards the climax. The illustrations are depicted in bold, bright, opaque primary colors, embellished with bold outline in black or bright yellow, which accentuates the drawings. The background is stark white, which sharply contrasts the lines and color. The pictures are very stylized, with a 1960 psychedelic look. This is most prevalent in the last two pages when the cannon is shot off, consuming the entire page with swirls and mannered design.

*Drummer Hoff* has been called an anti-war poem ([www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org)). It is said that the Emberleys did not confirm the actual message of *Drummer Hoff*. However, Ed Emberley’s artistic influences are revealed in Lacy’s analysis:

Children's appreciation for historical detail in *Drummer Hoff* can be enhanced by looking through such books as *Warriors in Art* by Nancy Forte. The intricate design of metalwork on the cannon raises the interesting historical note that some of the first cannonmakers had originally been bellmakers, and so cannons were often as ornate as church bells. The sun motif Emburley placed on the cannon's carriage was a deliberate reference, verified by the artist himself, to the French royal foundry at Tours, where the gunmakers often embellished their work with the flaming-sun insignia of the French royal family. (93)

In 1969 the story was made into an animated 6-minute theatrical short, directed by Gene Deitch and produced by Morton Schindelof. It was released on DVD in 2008 ("Drummer Hoff").

Kathleen Horning, a librarian who has served on many ALA award committees, is also a former chair of the Newbery Award Committee. She wrote *From Cover to Cover Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books* (2010); *The Newbery and Caldecott Awards: A Guide to the Medal and Honor Books* (2009); and *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults: A Selected listing of Books* (1980-1990). While Horning has keen insight, grounded in experience on great children's literature, even she is unable to discern for certain the message of *Drummer Hoff*: Horning wonders,

Were critics of the day ignoring the message? Did they not see a message? Or did they expect people to read between the lines? Perhaps in 1968, even at the height of the anti war era, there was more tolerance for-or even outright acceptance of the strong interest many young children have in toy guns and pretend explosions...Or perhaps the psychedelic counterculture colors and the final image

of the cannon rusting in a field of flowers were enough to balance the violent action with an antiwar message. (Horning, “Drummer Hoff”)

Ultimately, perhaps the ambiguity of the book’s stance on war reflects its time: the United States was embroiled in the Vietnam conflict, which, as American history has borne out, represented and still represents inner turmoil in the nation—when and if the United States should go to war, and to what extent it should remain involved in protracted conflicts beyond its own shores.

Ed Emberley has earned much recognition for his interest in the use of color. He is also noted for his bold figures created by using circles, triangles, and rectangles that have established Emberley as a children’s art instructor ever since his first book, *The Wing on a Flea: A Book about Shapes*. In his eleven very popular drawing books for children published from 1969 through 1980, he created what he calls a “graphic vocabulary” for the kind of geometrical artistic style used in *Drummer Hoff* (Lacy 69). Lacy further explains that “Kahbahbloom” exemplified three of the six long-established principles of color contrast: the harmony of triads, the harmony of adjacent, and the harmony of opposites” (81). Lacy notes that *Drummer Hoff* is an excellent vehicle for introducing young children to complex art: “Those adults who desire to expose children to artistic study more sophisticated than a fundamental exploration of standard color harmonies will find the book is additionally a splendid introduction to the complexities of color printing” (76).

Genre: fiction, folk verse

Subject: cannons, soldiers, rhyming words,

Age: 6-9

1969. *The Fool of The World and The Flying Ship*. Written and illustrated by Uri Shulevitz, retold by Arthur Ransome.

In 1916 Arthur Ransome wrote *Old Peter's Russian Tales*. The first chapter tells of two grandchildren that live with their grandfather "Old Peter." Old Peter tells them twenty stories, one being *The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship*. This Russian fairy tale is about a simple folk man, a.k.a., *The Fool of the World*. When the Fool hears that the Czar is offering his daughter to anyone that can build a flying ship, he sets off despite the odds. In spite of his belittling title of *The Fool of the World*, he possesses much innocence, imagination, and strength. This so-called fool enjoys the journey along the way and the result of marrying the Czar's daughter. The moral of this story is that God loves even the fools and will turn things to their advantage in the end. The use of perspective and scale size elevates the fool in different ways. A full range of colors is present with overlay of detailed ink lines that add to the complexity of the unknown journey. The illustrations are of Russian folk art; "Folk art encompasses art produced from an indigenous culture or by peasants or other laboring tradespeople. In contrast to fine art, Folk art is primarily utilitarian and decorative rather than purely in aesthetics" (West 440). This native style is not confined to traditional rules of proportion and perspective. In spite of the illustrations having an eerie quality, they are known for their bold, colorful, and spontaneous nature.

In 1990 the one-hour movie inspired by the book *The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship* was released, winning an International Emmy Award for Children and Young People. The Caldecott book's influence goes even further. There is another book version: *The Fool and the Flying Ship (Rabbit Ears We All Have Tales)* in 2013 by Eric

Metaxas. In addition, *The Fool and the Flying Ship* was made into a 30-minute, short video narrated by Robin Williams in 1991.

Genre: Russian folk tale

Subject: flying ship, teaches the importance of treating others with respect and kindness, God's love, cleverness

Age: 4+

### **Caldecott Books—1970s**

The 1970s included an abundance of moral-based stories that were more abstract than previous Caldecott winners. The 1970s Caldecott books provided metaphors for life and death, separation from parents, rewards for following through, and no repercussions for evil behavior. Cause and effect via folk tale, trips to the underworld, and the transformation of truth to fiction and human to animal were addressed. In addition, different cultures were also heavily represented. During this decade, the nation was grappling with questions of right and wrong—both within and beyond the nation. The award-winning children's books of this decade invited young children to start considering moral issues and developing a strong moral compass.

1970. *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*. Written and illustrated by William Steig.

Sylvester (a donkey) loves to collect pebbles as a hobby. One day he finds a magic red pebble that will grant him anything. Before he can decide his wishes, he must first get out of danger when he sees a lion. Out of fright, he wishes himself to be a rock. A problem arises, as he cannot pick up the pebble to wish himself back. Poor Sylvester

sits as a rock for quite some time. Eventually he is reunited with his family when by chance his mother finds the magic pebble. As she sits on the Sylvester-rock, she exclaims how they miss Sylvester and want to see him; he then appears, and they are a happy family again. The moral of this story is that Sylvester already had everything he needed at home with his loving family. This story is very relatable to children, for it embodies their world, family, and home. A child will surely be transfixed with each illustration, wanting to know if Sylvester ever sees his mother and father again. A sample of the endearing text reads: “Mrs. Duncan sat down on the rock. The warmth of his own mother sitting on him woke Sylvester up from his deep winter sleep. How he wanted to shout, Mother! Father! It’s me, Sylvester, I’m right here! but he couldn’t talk. He had no voice. He was stone-dumb” (Steig 131). The pictures of the Duncan donkey-family are so endearing and the text is sure to keep a child enthralled.

The watercolor, Indian ink, pen and ink illustrations depict Sylvester and his parents with such emotion. Steig’s illustrations are instantly recognizable in his books. His style is consistent in his use of involving a fairly thick, sketchy black line, outlining the figures with watercolor loosely applied and often including stripes, polka dots, and flowered patterns in his characters’ clothing and in the background (Hammond and Nordstrom 98).

Steig wanted to make sure that the children would be able to quickly identify his characters, so he was sure not to mix up the colors of the outfits. He methodically painted in the colors one by one on each page’s characters. By doing this he created consistency of color, aiding the reader in identification. Marcus explains Steig’s process: “When he made his final illustrations, he first completed all the black and white drawings, then

painted the colors. That way, he could be sure not to mix up the colors of his characters' outfits from picture to picture" (*A Caldecott Celebration* 29).

Sylvester and his parents are drawn as donkeys; however, they walk and sit as humans do. The following quote explains how Steig's donkeys came about, "'Donkeys,' he said, 'are my favorite animals. For some reason, every time I see a donkey I get pleasure from it'" (Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 27). The use of animals as characters is a theme that is seen throughout the Caldecott Award books. Most children immediately relate to an animal as a character; they are familiar, and are usually drawn with endearing attributes. For example, Sylvester's mother and father wear human clothes, even reading glasses. One illustration shows Sylvester's mom as she sits at a window in her colorful dress waiting for him to return while tears stream down her face.

*Sylvester and The Magic Pebble* did create controversy with reviewers and the police of the day; "*Sylvester and The Magic Pebble* has been interpreted as both a metaphor for death and for childish helplessness, yet children will only see a classic story of a lost child who is found by his loving parents" (Eccleshare 280). During this tumultuous time, political and social change was emerging and emotions were running high. This limited children's access to the book.

In 1970, while the country was experiencing social unrest due to Vietnam War protests, the International Conference of Police Association campaigned unsuccessfully to remove *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* from libraries because policeman in the story were depicted as pigs. They felt this was derogatory because antiwar protesters called policemen "pigs". Pigs are often characters in Steig's books. Steig always claimed he did not insert any political or social messages into his children's stories because "only an



idiot would do something like that, bother kids with that kind of stuff” (Hammond and Nordstrom 199).

Further, Lacy explains additional social interpretations of the book: “Sociologists studying the American drug culture suggested that Sylvester’s turning into a rock was an allegory for ‘getting stoned,’ and other reviewers pondered Steig’s decision to render Sylvester and his parents as a family of jackasses” (Lacy 172). For the Police Association to go to the trouble of trying to remove this book, it shows how influential the Caldecott Award-winning books truly are. The time period in which a book is published is important as it could be interpreted according to the cultural times of that era.

Judging from Steig’s quote that he chose to express during such an important speech, he is perhaps intimating that his book should be taken at face value. It represents the concept of family, love, separation and loss: “‘Art . . . enhances the sense of wonder. And wonder is respect for life’” (Steig’s Caldecott acceptance speech, qtd. in Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 26).

Prior to Steig’s prolific children’s book writing, he was best known as a cartoonist and cover artist for *The New Yorker*. In fact, it was not until he was 61 years old that he wrote his first book. More than thirty books for children followed, some of which were part of a series. His classics include: *Dr. De Soto* (1982), the famous *Shrek* (1990), and *Pete’s a Pizza* (1998). He was the U.S. nominee for both of the biennial international Hans Christian Andersen Awards, as a children’s book illustrator in 1982 and as a writer in 1988.

Due to Steig’s and Shrek’s popularity, Shrek branched out to the movies: *Shrek* (2001); *Shrek 2* (2004); *Shrek the Third* (2007); and *Shrek Forever After* (2010). There

were two television specials, *Shrek the Halls* (2007) and *Scared Shrekless* (2010). *Shrek* won an academy award for Best Animated Feature Film in 2001. Steig's accomplishments were also financially rewarding, as "Steig became the first solo-creator of an animated movie franchise that went on to generate over one-billion from theatrical and ancillary markets after only one sequel" (*The Numbers*). *Shrek* went on to be adapted into a musical and comics, and was incorporated into the Far Far Far Away theme park attraction in Singapore.

Genre: drama, cartoon/comic, and mythology/folklore

Subject: donkeys, family, love, judgment, action, and moral: be careful what you wish for

Age: 4+

1971. *A Story, A Story: An African Tale*. Written and illustrated by Gail E. Haley.

This story is an African folktale. The main character, Kwaku Ananse, the Spider Man, spins a web up to heaven to ask the Sky God to share these stories, which are contained in a special box, with the world. He scatters the stories all over the Earth. This tale is about how "spider stories"—stories about how small, senseless men and animals came to be heroes. Each woodcut illustration reflects the West African culture with colorful fabric and designs. They are stylized with bright colors and patterns resembling batik patterns, a technique for hand-dyeing cloth using removable wax to repel dyes and then boiling the cloth to dissolve the wax and reveal undyed areas.

In the tradition of Caldecott Award winners, Haley did her due diligence and researched for a year the African roots of many of the Caribbean tales.

The following represents the practical use of how one person, a teacher, was

touched by this book in her youth and still sees it as current more than forty years later:

“My parents purchased this book for me when I was a child, so when it was time for our Black culture Jubilee at school I wanted to bring the Anansi tales for my students” (a teacher’s review of *A Story, A Story* from Amazon).

Genre: African tale

Subject: Africa, culture, sky God, tales, earth, culture, spider man

Age: 4+

1972. *One Fine Day*. Written and illustrated by Nonny Hogrogian.

*One Fine Day* is a cumulative or sequencing tale; such books are most enjoyed by smaller children, for the repeated refrain is familiar and fosters interactivity.

This story also falls in the genre of a folktale. It is the first Armenian-based Caldecott book. A fox learns a costly lesson about taking responsibility for his actions. He doesn’t care if he steals milk from an old farm woman, until she cuts his tail off. He learns his lesson when he is forced to take responsibility in order to get his tail back. The repeated use of the same colors (red, orange, and yellow) coincides with the fox’s sequential search. *One Fine Day* was illustrated with oil paintings and is a further example of line effects when color meets color. Basic sequencing is presented when the fox must get a number of items from other characters in order to get his tail sewn back on. All his encounters are conditional, except for one. The miller freely gives to the fox without asking for anything in return.

The moral, accountability, is particularly salient to a young child, as accountability is something that must be addressed throughout one’s life. This book

tangibly shows all the work in sequential order that the fox had to do in order to get his tail back. The repetition in this story allows the child to participate in the story. The fox becomes responsible for his actions. Many of Hogrogian's books are a retelling of folk and fairy tales.

Hogrogian won the Caldecott Award twice: *Always Room For One More* (1966) and *One Fine Day* (1972). In addition, her *The Contest: An Armenian Folktale* was named in 1977 as a Caldecott Honor Book. Some of her other books include: *Vasilisa the Beautiful* (1970), *The Tiger of Turkestan* (2002), *Come Back Moon* (2013), and *The Armenian Cookbook* (2014).

Genre: Armenian folktale, moral lesson

Subject: fox, old lady, honesty, responsibility, cause and effect, self-centeredness, shows how one's actions affect others, unselfishness

Age: 4+

1973. *The Funny Little Woman*. Illustrated by Blair Lent, retold by Arlene Mosel.

This is a Japanese tale set in "Old Japan" about a runaway dumpling that escapes down a hole, leading the main character, the little woman, to the underground. She was warned by many not to proceed to the underground, but did not listen. When she realizes she must escape the underground, she has to outwit the three-eyed oni demon. She finds herself cooking dumplings for the demons but uses her ingenuity by enchanting them with her laughter, thus releasing her from them.

The following two points should be noted about this book: The element of the demons depicted may be scary for a young child, which should be taken into

consideration when deciding whether to purchase the book. Second, this story was the first Caldecott to feature a Japanese woman as a main character. Therefore, it served to represent exposure to another culture. Blair Lent and Arlene Mosel also wrote other books, one of which is very well known, *Tikki Tikki Tembo* (1968)

The Horn Book Review states this story's illustrations faithfully represent elements of Japanese culture, while at the same time creating something entirely new: "Using elements of traditional Japanese art, the illustrator has made marvelously imaginative pictures" (qtd. in "The Funny Little Woman").

Genre: Japan, fiction, folklore

Subject: Japanese depicted women, demons, rice cakes, not listening to advice, moral

Age: 4+

1974. *Duffy and the Devil*. Illustrated by Margot Zemach, retold by Harve Zemach.

*Duffy and the Devil* was a popular play in Cornwall, England, in the nineteenth century, performed at the Christmas season by young people on a house-to-house basis. The Zemachs have interpreted the folk tale recognizable as a version of the widespread Rumpelstiltskin story ("Duffy and the Devil"). In this English folktale, Duffy (who takes the place of Rumpelstiltskin's character), makes a deal with the impish-looking devil to spin yarn. Duffy does this for quite some time, until it is time to live up to his end of the deal with the devil. In the end, good fortune with no consequences rescues Duffy. No lesson here. This story would be best put to use for a teacher or parent to read side by side in comparing and contrasting the characters of Duffy and The Fox from *One Fine Day* (Caldecott 1972 Medal). Taken together, these two books offer a great deal of material

from a moral perspective, in addition to those lessons put forth by the pictures which speak to art history.

Lacy explains the significance of the illustrations in *Duffy and the Devil*:

The illustrations are full of chaotic action and detailed complexity reminiscent of genre scenes depicting events from everyday life, such as many of those by sixteenth-century painter Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Galloping, chasing, tangling, spinning, dancing characters all have the same fat bulging shapes and homely faces except for the gap-toothed and lecherous devil Tarraway—and all are covered in patterned and textured layers of clothes in earthy tones, except for the squire in a nude scene. (173)

The watercolor pen-and-wash illustrations are whimsical and cartoonish, and the jagged lines give energy and movement to the illustrations. Zemach's drawings are often characterized as cartoons. She has illustrated more than thirty picture books, thirteen in collaboration with her husband Harvey. Winning the Caldecott Award for *Duffy and The Devil* was bittersweet for Margot, as her husband and collaborator, Harve Zemach, died between the time the book was published and the award was conferred.

*Duffy and the Devil* is a 1973 *New York Times Book Review* Notable Children's Book of the year, *School Library Journal Best Books* of the year awardee, Caldecott Medal Winner, ALA Notable Children's Book, National Book Awards Finalist, NYTBR Notable Children's BOTY, School Library Best Books of The Year, Horn Book Magazine Fanfare List honoree, *New York Times* Outstanding Book of the Year, and American Library Association Notable Children's Book.

As Maurice Sendak expressed, children's books do not always have to show the

happy side of life. Judging from the accolades that *Duffy and the Devil* received, it would seem that others agree that Duffy's lack of character does not detract from the book as a whole. Perhaps the Zemachs wanted to portray this reality of life.

Genre: Cornish Folklore

Subject: devil, Duffy, making choices morally, making a shady deal, lack of honesty

Age: 5+

1975. *Arrow to the Sun: A Pueblo Tale*. Written and illustrated by Gerald McDermott.

This book is a retelling of an old tale of a young boy (the son of the Sun Lord) who was in search of his father. During that time, he is first put through a test before he can claim his heritage; he needs to pass through the four ceremonial chambers: the Kiva of lions, the Kiva of snakes, the Kiva of bees, and the Kiva of lightning. The boy endures the trials and then the Lord concedes that he is his son. The boy is then sent back to Earth to bring the sun's spirit to the world. *Arrow to the Sun* colorfully evokes the Native American reverence for the source of wildlife—the solar fire. This story is also said to have some parallels with the story of Christ's journey.

The illustrations are of fiery, vibrant colors, angular, sharply defined geometric forms (representations have a flattened, 2-dimensional look) depicting the stylized look of the Pueblo Indian art. The yellow, orange, brown, and black illustrations are indicative of the culture. The book's illustrations consist of gouache, transparent dyes, ink, and collage. McDermott did not attempt a literal re-creation of Southwest Indian art. The representations of humans in the story are inspired by Kachina images. Kachina dolls represent supernatural beings—rain spirits and the like—not human figures. The word

Kachina has long been used by outsiders to refer to any of the hundreds of spiritual beings central to Hopi religious life, as well as the dolls that depict them (Padgett).

McDermott's books focus on folktales and cultures from around the world. In keeping with Caldecott Award winners, he extensively researched the cultures and customs of his stories' origins.

Many professional reviewers, including William Cole, a writer for the *Saturday Review*, were very taken with the illustrations and praised the artwork, "'You're paying for some of the most gorgeous colors ever put in a children's book—the colors of the Southwest, with shades of orange and yellow predominating. This could win prizes'" (qtd. in Horning, "Arrow"). And so it did. *Arrow to The Sun* was previously made into a short film in 1973, then went on to become 1975's Caldecott Award winner.

*Arrow to the Sun* is a prime example of how a book could be influenced and viewed according to the politics of the day. *Arrow to the Sun* was published in 1974, a time when librarians were involved in the politics of children's book selections. The social unrest of the Vietnam War (1955-1975) commanded much involvement. It appears that the social unrest in the United States and the world might have influenced the Caldecott committee's Award selections. As Kathleen Horning states:

Professional arguments were raging within the American Library Association between members of the Office for Intellectual Freedom (advocating content-neutral selection decisions) and the Social Responsibilities Round Table (decrying racism and sexism), with fires stoked by the Council on Interracial Books for Children, who at the time were calling for children's librarians to look at older books with a more enlightened and socially conscious eye, to reevaluate them



(and presumably, to weed them out of library collections). The Council, a few years earlier, had called for reconsideration of old chestnuts such as Helen Bannerman's *Little Black Sambo* and Hugh Lofting's *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*, and few in the profession argued in favor of keeping these books on library shelves. But when the spotlight fell on recent Newbery Award winners such as 1970's *Souder* and 1974's *The Slave Dancer*, many of the children's literature establishment grew defensive. At the ALA Annual meeting in 1974, for example, Helen Mullin, (the chair of a committee) charged with reevaluating all of the Notable Children's Books published from 1940-1970, reported to the Children's Service Division board that they had decided "not to reevaluate any of the Newbery/Caldecott books chosen during the 30 year span and not to focus on racism or sexism in their re-evaluations. ("Arrow")

*Arrow to the Sun*, along with the following books, created some controversy for being written by white artists about races that were not their own. The books are: *Mei Li* (1939), *Song of the Swallows* (1950), *Nine Days to Christmas* (1960), *Once a Mouse* (1962), *The Snowy Day* (1963), and *A Story, A Story* (1971).

Gerald McDermott remarked in his Caldecott speech that "The artist's duty [is] to 'pierce the screen of convention,' whether by arrow or by brush, even if it means risking controversy and criticism" (qtd. in Horning, "Arrow"). We see that McDermott, in his subject and technique, did not shy away from criticism, and in his courage in presenting his artwork, he influenced the standards of picture books for children.

Genre: A Pueblo Indian Tale, youth non-fiction

Subject: Pueblo designs, a series of trials to prove his truth, how the boy brings the sun's

spirit into the world of men, the celebration of his return ...the dance of life, a respect for the source of all life-the solar Fire, the boy's single quest for bravery.

Age: 4+

1976. *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*. Illustrated by Lee & Diane Dillon, retold by Verna Aardema.

This retelling of a traditional West African folktale explains through a chain of cumulative events how misunderstandings can occur and become the truth temporarily. The onomatopoeic text complements the bold illustrations. Fortunately, all of the inferences are straightened out, one by one, which enables Mother Owl, the main character, to hoot and wake up the sun. This is a thought-provoking story about inferences vs. facts and cause-and-effect. *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* could be likened to the game children play called telephone. In this game, one child whispers into another's ear telling a short story, then the next child repeats it with some alteration and then passes it on, and so on and so on, by the time it ends with the last child the original story is totally different.

The Dillons' illustrations are based on African batik. They consist of watercolor that is applied with an airbrush of fine spray and a splatter technique. A stencil form called a frisket was used for the angular masks. Multiple scenes in one spread are portrayed with colorful bold images, and the expressive characters are flattened in style. The pastels are hand rubbed.

Other accolades for the Dillons include 1977's The Brooklyn Art Books Children Award, and in 1984 the adaptation of *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* into an

animated short narrated by James Earl Jones.

Leo and Diane Dillon, husband and wife illustrators, also won the Caldecott Medal the next year for *Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions* (1977). Prior to this, no other illustrators won this coveted award two years in a row.

Caldecott Award-winning books are ageless as they transcend generations. The following review of *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* posted on Amazon by a parent states this: "My son absolutely loved this book as a child. He just had his first son, so I asked him if we still had a copy. We are constantly just checking it out from the library" (Amazon review). This book, like all Caldecott winners, is timeless, and the illustrations continue to bring the stories to life in the imaginations of children.

Genre: West African Pourquoi tale (a Pourquoi tale describes the origin of something. It is called "pourquoi" [por-kwa] which is French for "why").

Subject: African, cause and effect, cumulative tale, folk art, and animals

Age: 5+

1977. *Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions*. Illustrated by Lee & Diane Dillon. Written by Margaret Musgrove.

Twenty-six African non-fiction traditions are each explained in this book, spanning the letters A-Z, each accompanied by a short vignette.

For example: "Q/Quimbande (keem-bahn'-deh) children can have as many as twenty-five brothers and sisters if their fathers can afford them..." (*Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions*). A map of Africa is included to illustrate where the people in the story are from. It is illustrated with monochromatic colors of browns and tans,

accentuated with bright turquoise and pinks. Paintings are done in pastels, watercolors, and acrylics. The Dillons' style is very similar to that of Viennese artist Gustav Klimt, who uses rich, mosaic-like color patterns for figures and landscapes. Lacy describes the teaching role that the illustrations have in the overall scheme of the book: "The pictures in themselves are not visual narration as such but provide clarification for Musgrove's information, description, or anecdotes. Only a slight connecting textural link continues from page to page. The result is a book with abundant verbal and visual images best appreciated by older children" (171).

This Caldecott winner is unique in that the text is nonfiction and a series of single-page framed paintings by the Dillons have a documentary, instructional purpose. The majority of other Caldecott winners are picture-book stories. The Dillons prepared thoroughly to create every illustration—a seeming constant for Caldecott winning authors—based on months of research that led the Dillons to back issues of *National Geographic*, university experts, librarians, museums, galleries, and the United Nations. The pictures of the subjects—man, woman, child, animals, living areas, and artifacts—are authentic (Lacy 170).

Genre: African traditions, non fiction

Subject: African traditions, customs, clothes, home, animals, food etc.

Age: 6+

1978. *Noah's Ark*. Illustrated and written by Peter Spier.

There is no text other than a poem in this version of *Noah's Ark*. Words are not needed because the illustrations are so detailed that they speak for themselves. Every inch

of each page is consumed with interesting and pertinent details. Each minute detail is independent, and yet interdependent, to the whole of each page. The intricacies are reminiscent of the minute detail in a *Where's Waldo* illustration. The illustrations were created with pen and watercolor. A short video called *Peter Spier Author Video: The World of Peter Spier* is available on YouTube; this video touches upon his background, his philosophy, his books, and demonstrates his painting technique.

In the *Noah's Ark* illustrations, there is no distinct background per se, as every inch of space is filled with equally-weighted intricate details that complete the whole. A book of this kind will actively engage a child with all of its fine details. The child will almost always view the page as a game; to find numerous things within the whole illustration. This book is a perfect example of demonstrating that pictures precede text, and the lack of text does not detract from the story at all.

This iconic edition of *Noah's Ark* has been continuously in print for over 40 years since its debut in 1977. Spier received several noteworthy accolades for his work during a four-year span; he received the Caldecott Medal (1978), Lewis Shelf Award (1978), and National Book Award for Children's Books, Picture Books (1982).

Genre: Biblical tale

Subject: Noah's Ark, animals, ark, water

Age: 2+

1979. *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses*. Written and illustrated by Paul Goble.

This mythological tale focuses on a young Native American girl who loves wild horses. She admires their beauty and freedom. She cares for her tribe's horses that are

used for the nomadic hunting of buffalo. Due to a thunderstorm (which is dramatically depicted with swirling zigzags and yellow lightning against the black sky), she is carried away on the back of one of the frightened horses. She is very content living with the horses but is missed by her tribe. During a search, the girl is discovered by members of her tribe and brought home. She is very unhappy there and asks to return to live among the horses. Her parents unselfishly let her go. The story ends with the girl forever riding free among them and believing that she turned into a horse. The straightforward text seems akin to the simplicity of the girl: her wishes were simple and humble.

The pictures depicted show colorful ethnographic imagery of the Plains Indians of North America, demonstrating Goble's careful and systematic study of the Plains Indians. The illustrations are bold in color, mostly earth colors with stark white backgrounds. Goble is noted for his use of outlining his subjects with a thin white space. Goble's depictions also show the close relationship between Native Americans and nature, which is indicative of the culture. This book would be admired by anyone who reveres Native American culture, as it authentically portrays the Plains, camps, customs, and costumes.

Paul Goble's interest in the lifestyle of the Native Americans began as a child when he was fascinated by all things Indian. His mother would read Native American tales to him, and he and his brother would collect pictures from magazines and books about the Plains Indians of North America. Inspired as a young man by the contemporary American Indian Movement for Civil Rights, his first three picture books were accounts of Plains Indian history.

Goble wrote and illustrated many stories: *The Gift of the Sacred Dog* (1980), *Star Boy* (1981), *Death of the Iron Horse* (1987), *Her Seven Brothers* (1988), *Storm Maker's*

*Tipi* (2001), *Mystic Horse* (2003), and *Tipi: Home of the Nomadic Buffalo Hunters* (2007). Additionally, numerous other books that Goble wrote and illustrated clearly show his love and knowledge of the subject matter and his reverence for the people and their culture. These books should be read by anyone that is interested in learning about Native American culture and would be perfect for a teacher to use when presenting a unit on the Plains Indians.

*The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses* clearly has feminist implications and is markedly different from Goble's earlier books, *Red Hawk's Account of Custer's Last Battle* (1969) and *Brave Eagle's Account of the Fetterman Fight, 21 December 1866* (1972), which were more focused on the Native American male warrior. Goble's connection with Plains mythology further evolved throughout his career. His pictures of the Plains Indian are vibrant in color and are true to the geometric designs of Native American crafts. Eccleshare explains that Goble's work reflects the cultural life of the Plains Indians, especially in its melding of narrative and symbol: "Goble's style in this story moves between storytelling and symbolic, almost abstract, expressions of the relationship of Native Americans with nature, for example in this striking final page, which shows the necks and heads of the two horses within the circle of the red evening sun"(311). The description by Julia Eccleshare, General Editor of *1001 Children's Books You Must Read Before You Grow Up*, echoes Goble's work to show the harmony of the sun (a revered object in nature) and the horses.

Goble over time donated a large body of his paintings to the South Dakota Art Museum, which now owns 500 pieces of original artwork from his books (Maughan "Obituary"). In 2018, the museum hosted an exhibit of Goble's illustrations, *Butterflies*

*and Blooms*. The South Dakota Art museum sells prints and notecards featuring Goble's work. One can also buy a print by making a donation to Paul Goble Conservation ("Membership & Support").

Genre: Native American mythology

Subject: Native American, girl, wild horses, region of North America, plants, animals, sun

Age: 5+

### **Caldecott Books—1980s**

The 1980s continued with moral-based stories. Among the books in this decade was Chris Van Allsburg's *Jumanji*, which provided more sophistication regarding images and storyline, including surrealism and fantasy. The storylines were not as tangible and concrete in the 1980s, with many books encouraging flights of imagination and fantasy. Some of the stories were a little darker. In *The Polar Express*, Van Allsburg also provided the world with a new take on Christmas, producing illustrations and text that went beyond the traditional picture book. The 1980s also included a highly criticized award-winner in "Hey Al," paving the way for books that were more experimental in form and content in the decades to come.

1980. *Ox-Cart Man*. Illustrated by Barbara Cooney, written by Donald Hall.

This book describes a lyrical journey of the day-to-day life of a farmer and his family in the early nineteenth century. The farmer lives on a rural farm in New England. The book centers on the family's ten-day walk to and from the market. Life then was



vastly different from life at the time of the book's composition, and the book gives children a glimpse of what their daily life might have been like had they been born a century and a half earlier. In the story the farmer uses his ox-cart to take his goods to the Portsmouth market with his family. There he will sell the goods off one by one or barter with them to provide for his family until the next market would be held (usually seasonally). The cycle goes on and on. In the end, he eventually sells his ox too.

This book teaches about trade, farming, seasons, cause and effect, and a sense of community and the cumulative effects of people working together. This story is sure to convey the origins of things that were then consumed. Its implications show children that consumables come from somewhere, not just simply appearing in a supermarket. In addition, it shows the tangible connection of how animals and goods relate to the seasons.

Unsurprisingly, the author did a great deal of research for this book, which is reflected in the illustrations by Cooney. The illustrations are depicted in a simple folk-style genre of art of unknown origin, reflecting the simplicity of early American drawing. Cooney depicts the "Native art style which depicts scenes out of the artist's own experience in what appears to be an untrained, awkward style" (Horning, *From Cover to Cover* 111). There is no depth to the pictures, and people and objects appear flat and one-dimensional in this and several of Cooney's picture books, reflecting the simple folk-style genre of art. Cooney's art is careful in its faithfulness to the art of the time period it depicts.

As we see in all Caldecott books, the symbiosis of text and illustration creates great works of children's literature. Cooney is a noteworthy illustrator, and her work is underscored by the masterful children's writing of Hall (1928-2018), an American poet,

writer, editor, and literary critic. He published over fifty books in many different genres. Hall is said to be a poet of rural life in New Hampshire's natural world, having lived for decades in the Granite State. Some of his numerous awards are as follows: Poet Laureate for New Hampshire (1984-89), the Lamont Poetry Prize for *Exiles and Marriages* (1955), two Guggenheim fellowships (1963-64, 1972-73), and inclusion on the Horn Book Honour List (1986). In 2010, he received a National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama ("Donald Hall: 1928-2018," *Poetry Foundation*; "Donald Hall: 1928-2018," *Poets.org*).

*Ox-Cart Man* was originally published as a poem in the October 3, 1977 issue of *The New Yorker*. Hall revised the poem to accommodate a children's book. This book was also featured on the children's show *Reading Rainbow*, Season Two. Cooney had also won a Caldecott Medal for *Chanticleer and the Fox* (1959).

Genre: lyrical journey fiction

Subject: nineteenth-century farm life, trade, seasons, farming, cause and effect, family members

Age: 4+

1981. *Fables*. Written and illustrated by Arnold Lobel.

These short, original fables with morals poke subtly at a minor weakness or eccentricity in someone's character. This is done through the antics of animals, which makes it all the more palatable; without the whimsical illustrations the moral and fable would be delivered totally differently and children would likely not absorb the moral as effectively.

Each fable's (twenty in all) illustrations are formatted within a frame, with the cartoon characters on one side, and the opposite page containing the fable and moral. The playful text and whimsical illustrations are sure to captivate any child. For example, an illustration of a blue lobster and crab in a small boat riding the surf accompanies the fable of "The Lobster and The Crab." The text is coupled with a picture of a lobster standing on a boat with large waves crashing below, as the crab holds on (Lobel 8). Other catchy stories include "A Pig Flying Through a Marshmallow Flows to Marzipan Moon," "The Crocodile in the Bedroom," "The Ostrich in Love," and "The Baboon's Umbrella." Each tale ends with a sliver of wisdom. For example, "Even the taking of small risks will add excitement to life." The fables are lighthearted and not overly moralistic. The names of the characters are just as creative as the illustrations, showing harmony between illustration and text.

A fable is a very short story that conveys a moral or a lesson. Fables rarely feature more than two characters, which are often animals. The use of animals in children's literature serves many purposes. With respect to this book, the animals are an integral part of the fables as they are depicted with great personality in the cartoonish drawings. Who can resist a talking lobster? Arnold Lobel's stories feature animals with which children are familiar, but he depicts them in unconventional ways: a dog wearing a coat, Madame Rhinoceros wearing a fancy dress, a kangaroo family, a pig flying about, an elephant and his son in bathrobes, and a bird wearing a fancy suit in a decorative environment. Lobel's illustrations are fanciful, which adds to their presence and provides more for a child to love. There are many more short stories contained in this book of 48 pages. It is best read in increments.

Arnold Lobel also wrote the popular series of books about Frog and Toad: *Frog and Toad* (1970); *Frog and Toad Are Friends* (1970), a 1971 Caldecott Honor book; *Frog and Toad Together* (1972); *Frog and Toad All Year* (1976); and *Days With Frog and Toad* (1979), including others. The Frog and Toad series is designed for children who have reached the I Can Read Level. Lobel also wrote various other books, such as *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children* (1983).

Lobel's work has redefined the process and prospects for teaching children to read. Lobel's work is critically acclaimed in this area: "Lobel's chosen vocabulary, subject matter, and writing style helped re-conceive what an early reader could be" ("Arnold Lobel"). Individual educators and parents, too, have praised Lobel's work through the years. A recent review of Lobel's *Fables* on Amazon by a teacher stated, "I have taken this book to work on all areas of language with my students." This teacher's students have either dyslexia, a language disorder, or an auditory processing disorder. For this book to be helpful to students with these challenges speaks volumes. The illustrations bring the text to life, making the text more approachable for children who face any type of challenge in reading.

Genre: Fables

Subject: animals, morals, practical-life lessons

Age: 3+

1982. *Jumanji*. Written and illustrated by Chris Van Allsburg.

Two children, Judy and Peter, are home alone with nothing to do, so they decide to go outside. While walking they come across an old and mysterious board game which,

at the time, seems like an ordinary game. However, they do not pay any attention to the note that accompanies the game which reads, “Free game, fun for some, but not all.”

There is a postscript, “Read instructions carefully” (Eccleshare 319). Of course, they also do not read the instructions. Upon playing the game, the characters within the game come to life. Imagine a lion, a rhino, and a monkey roaming through Judy and Peter’s house! A monsoon sweeps through the living room. Jumanji transforms Judy and Peter’s typical day into a crazy adventure or, better yet, a nightmare.

Each of Van Allsburg’s illustrations stands out in numerous ways, as all are truly works of art. Lacy shares insight on these magnificent illustrations that appear seamlessly drawn. For example, Van Allsburg’s illustrations were designed using three systems of linear perspective in order *to* heighten suspense: parallel perspective, wherein lines are parallel to a picture’s edge with a center vanishing point; angular perspective, where vertical lines are parallel to the sides of the picture with more than one vanishing point; and oblique perspective, where a tilted and unstable composition with lines not parallel with anything and the vertical lines converge up or down (Lacy 131). Van Allsburg dreams up odd combinations, combining ordinary things in unexpected ways. His drawings for the most part are strictly black and white with pattern, shape, and shadow. At first glance some of the objects in them seem commonplace—a monkey, a snake—but then there is a sharp, unexpected turn. The smallest detail or form of his pictures can create an unexpected, unsettling tone. For instance, the snake in *Jumanji* is out of context shown sitting on a mantel on a fireplace, although it seems to be there naturally as it blends right into the decor matching the pattern on the living room chair. Van Allsburg is a master of juxtaposition of objects.

Lacy explains in detail the techniques Van Allsburg uses to get his black and white drawings to be so flawless:

For his dim and grey illustrations, Van Allsburg used a black Conte Paris pencil or crayon (a compressed chalky substance bound by a unique formula that makes it different from charcoal, pastel, or chalk itself). Ground dust from the same kind of pencil was quickly applied with cotton balls and sprayed with matte fixative as background shade on the paper. Then drawing was done with a medium hard Conte, and gray values were the amounts of paper and dust still exposed. The resultant drawings in shades of gray make an interesting comparison for children with the crosshatched lines in *Wild Things* and have basically the same effect as grisaille, or painting in grays, a perfect technique here for the telling of the sinister twilight tale. (Lacy 126)

Van Allsburg is also a master of manipulating perspective, composition, and vantage points to direct the viewer. He explains, “Composition—the placement of the subject matter of a drawing within the rectangular of the picture is the part of picture making that gives me the most pleasure. I enjoy being able to move things around and to decide how big or small they should be” (qtd. in Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 31).

Hammond and Nordstrom explain the effect of Van Allsburg’s artistic technique:

“Masterly use of light and shadow and exaggerated changes of perspective create a bizarre and mystical world that leaves one wondering whether the adventure was real or imagined” (93). In *Jumanji* and *Where the Wild Things Are* the characters Judy, Peter, and Max all go on an adventure only to return home where everything is normal. It seems possible that it might have been a dream, or a fantasy—but children will wonder: was it?

Van Allsburg experiments with objects as they are disproportionate to scale size, placing objects out of context, such as a rhino in the dining room and a huge snake on a fireplace mantel. Van Allsburg combines ordinary things in extraordinary ways, and he provides several vantage points in the depiction of each scene. These illustrations have a surreal quality, reminiscent of the art of the Surrealist period. Famous Surrealist artists among others in the history of art are Rene Magritte, Salvador Dali, Andre Breton, and Max Ernst. Van Allsburg said, “‘If all artists were forced to wear a badge, I’d probably wear the badge of surrealism... a gentle surrealism with certain unsettling provocative elements’” (qtd. in Hammond and Nordstrom 93).

Van Allsburg’s skills are readily evident, even to an untrained professional; however, Lacy’s review eloquently explains the unsettling, yet beautiful effect his illustration creates:

When Chris Van Allsburg, *Jumanji* came out in 1981, the book was hailed in reviews as a masterpiece of light and dark and a diabolical exercise in eye-fooling angles. The artist himself was called a consummate draftsman whose extraordinary multiplicity of grey tones displayed a subtle intelligence beyond the call of illustration. That Van Allsburg created such a startlingly realistic-looking setting for a world in which the utterly impossible happens results from use of artistic perspectives that force the audience to join in as participants. The mood is ominous from beginning to end and reality is imitated solely through incredible mastery of black-and-white drawings. This twilight fantasy, as *Jumanji* has been called, has very dramatically given children a new way to see the inner world of an imagination gone berserk. (111)

Van Allsburg, like David Wiesner, among others, keeps inventing and changing the norms of the preceding Caldecott Award books. The style in which Van Allsburg chose to illustrate this book greatly enhances the story line. Lacy explores why his work in *Jumanji* is groundbreaking: “Van Allsburg chose to explore new ground by couching unnerving pictures within this rigid formality. Viewpoints assigned to the audience include a variety of exaggerated and maddeningly informal angles, more often from below or above the action than from a normal eye level” (117). Van Allsburg has obtained celebrity status with his perfection of craft.

Van Allsburg’s influences extend beyond Surrealist artists. In his Caldecott acceptance speech, as Lacy recounts, Van Allsburg credited other artists by whom he was influenced. He included the following artists for these reasons:

Seventeenth-century Dutch master Jan Vermeer has been called “the enchanter of Delft” for his compositional uses of light and dark. Edgar Degas, nineteenth-century impressionist, captured subjects in a fleeting moment. Max Klinger, late-nineteenth-century print maker, produced drawings charged with strange qualities of light and perspective; his *Glove Cycle* tells “stories fraught with Freudian symbolism.” Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini’s movies rely visually on the juxtaposition of events as well as emotional response. Andre Kertesz, pioneer in photography as an artistic tool, takes “surreal pictures of things having no surreal context.” (113)

Van Allsburg also chose to include in his Caldecott acceptance speech the following letter he received from a boy, which shows that he valued the boy’s sentiment and appreciated that the boy recognized the creative element of Van Allsburg’s work:



“‘Dear Mr. Van Allsburg . . . I am so glad your books are so weird because I am very weird. I think you are weird but great’” (qtd. in Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 31).

This child’s letter reinforces that a book’s illustrations must connect to the intended audience. Moreover, even if drawings are masterfully rendered, but do not relate to the intended audience, the full impact of what the book has to offer will be significantly diminished—and the book will not be considered for the Caldecott Award.

On a lighter note regarding Van Allsburg’s influences, “As in all Van Allsburg’s books, Fritz the bull-terrier, who is based on his brother-in-law’s dog, puts in an appearance, making it fun for readers to spot him” (Eccleshare 319).

*Jumanji* expanded into movies and merchandising. The first movie, *Jumanji*, was released in December 1995, starring Robin Williams. Worldwide box office receipts were just short of \$263,000,000. Since the movie acquired an A-list actor, the book and movie became further elevated by the actor’s notoriety. Next, a similar film marketed as the successor to *Jumanji* was released in December 2005 – *Zathura*, a space adventure starring Josh Hutcherson with world-wide box office receipts of \$58,545,540. A video game based on the film was released in Europe for the PlayStation 2 in 2006. In 2017, another movie, *Jumanji Welcome to The Jungle*, starring Dwayne Johnson was released with world-wide box office receipts of \$342,756,290. In 2014, Robin Williams recorded and audio book for the *Jumanji* 30th edition to coincide with its release.

The film also pivoted the *Jumanji* board to popularity. Children love fantasy, and the *Jumanji* game exemplified this. The by-product of the book/movie’s acclaim has rendered unprecedented revenue. In January 2014 Joe Johnston (director of *Jumanji*) sold the movie’s original screen *Jumanji* Board for \$60K. The auction on eBay saw 193 bids

(“Joe Johnston”).

Van Allsburg has won numerous awards. Besides his two Caldecott Medals for *Jumanji* (1982) and *The Polar Express* (1986), he won a Caldecott Honor Award for *The Garden of Abdul Gasazi* (1980). Other awards include: Boston Globe Horn Book Award: *The Garden of Abdul Gasazi* (1980); Picture Book Award, *Jumanji* (1981); Picture Book Honor, *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* (1985); Picture Book Honor, *The Polar Express* (1986); Picture Book Honor, National Book Award: *Jumanji* (1982), Picture Book Finalist; and the Regina Medal (1993) Lifetime Achievement Award.

The following passage is a perfect segue to the next Caldecott winner and shows the continuity and innovation in artistic technique from year to year:

Except for Van Allsburg, no Caldecott illustrator has demonstrated a more powerful use of light and dark than Marcia Brown in her 1983 Award winner *Shadow*, whose text was translated from the French poem by Blaise Cendrars. Using color in double-page spreads, Brown created boldly fantastic images in an African landscape by building up layers of overlapping paper or tissue cutouts blotted with paint and stamped by woodblocks. Although *Shadow*, *Jumanji*, and *The Polar Express* differ in subject matter and artistic style, they all affect the audience profoundly with their creations built around lightness and darkness.

(Lacy 138)

Genre: comedy, action, adventure, fantasy

Subject: children, game board, animals, theme of *Jumanji* is to read the directions to a board game, a free gift may not be so “free”

Age: 8+

1983. *Shadow*. Translated and illustrated by Marcia Brown, written by Blaise Cendrars.

This story illustrates a translation of Blaise Cendrars' French poem "La Feticheuse," translated and illustrated by Marcia Brown. The Native American myths of shadows translate into this story. The African-inspired wood-cut illustrations have an eerie ghost-like look. The abstract text includes the following lines: "The eye has no shadow" and "All the children of the Moon and of the Sun, the Earth, the Water, the Air, the Fire, own no shadow" (Brown).

The harsh, jagged images of the illustrations perfectly match the text, although some reviews of *Shadow* cautioned that some of the depictions may scare younger children. The jagged lines presented in *Shadow* are not presented as friendly images, in comparison to organic curves that are presented in *Prayer for a Child* (1945). Most illustrations are two pages unframed that cross the gutter (the blank area between two or more columns of text or between facing pages in a publication). The bright oranges contrast with the dark shades, adding to their prominence.

Brown traveled to Africa for research and inspiration and presented her own artistic impressions in *Shadow*. Critics have pointed out that Brown's choice to illustrate only primitive figures in untamed environments presents denigrating and destructive pictures that show stereotyped thinking and damage black children's racial image of themselves. Her choice of presenting much black and unearthly white may have had negative connotations as artistic symbols. There is a further negative connotation on that children are afraid of the dark and the supernatural (Lacy 138).

Brown is a three-time Caldecott Medalist and six-time Caldecott Honoree. She was awarded the Laura Ingalls Wilder award for the body of her work. Her other

Caldecott Medals are for *Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper* (1955) and *Once a Mouse... A Fable Cut in Wood* (1962).

Genre: African folklore

Subject: myths, folktales, translation of the poem, scary illustrations of Shadow, supernatural

Age: 7+

1984. *The Glorious Flight: Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot*. Written and illustrated by Alice and Martin Provensen.

This is a true story of the first flight across the English Channel and the man who piloted the plane, Louis Bleriot. His self-built plane succeeded after many attempts and some crashes. It sputtered into action at 4:35 AM on July 25, 1909, taking him from the coast of France and out over the English Channel. Thirty-seven minutes later, he landed in England, making history as the first person to cross water by air. Louis Bleriot's flight across the English Channel demonstrated to the world that barriers no longer existed for an airplane to cross the land and sea.

The art illustrations help to create the setting for the time period; the fashion, cars, planes, clothes, and the French street scenes. Art techniques used in the illustrations consist of sepia-toned acrylics and pen and ink illustrations with folk-like, stylized characters. The Provenses' artwork depicts early American primitivism ("a belief in the superiority of a simple way of life close to nature, belief in the superiority of non-industrial society to that of the present" ["Primitivism"]). The illustrations serve another function here, as they are authentic to the period. As Lacy explains, "They lend the

correct atmosphere of turn-of-the-century documentation to this true account of events leading up to the first flight across the English Channel, by a Frenchman whose place in aviation history is not as well-known as that of the Wright brothers and Charles A. Lindbergh” (212).

The accuracy of the drawings alone would not be enough for the child audience, as the following *Kirkus* review explains: “‘Factually accurate, yes-but also a witty pictorial reincarnation of Bleriot’s first experience of an airship... There’s dash, style, and economy here in both text and pictures’” (qtd. in “The Glorious Flight”). This book uniquely lends itself to classroom instruction, and Scholastic Inc. offers many lesson plans online pertaining to this book that a teacher can utilize. *The Glorious Flight* is integrated with lessons for art, language arts, science, social studies, and math.

Genre: Non-fiction, aviation history, biography

Subject: science, technology, planes, technology, persistence, passion, perseverance, literature, France

Age: 6+

1985. *Saint George and the Dragon: A Golden Legend*. Illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman, retold by Margaret Hodges.

This is an adaption from Sir Edmund Spenser’s Renaissance epic, *The Faerie Queene*. This book is the telling of how Saint George, a.k.a. Red Cross Knight, slays the deadly flying dragon that has been terrorizing the countryside for years. This heroism earns him the honor of marrying the King’s daughter, Una.

The uniqueness of the illustrations in *Saint George and the Dragon* is noticeable,

especially for a book created in the 1980s. The illustration style is of medieval manuscript illuminators; the red borders outline framed illustrations, adding the illusion of depth, which is also accentuated by what appears to be a stained-glass window. Further, an illusion of deep space is created by atmospheric perspective. As Lacy notes, There is a very formal placement of text for Saint George, and decorations are used in a few instances as elaborations on some words or become extensions of the major scene itself; first seen in the illustration of the dreadful dragon, whose tail continues within the border space on the opposite page (Lacy 211).

Children, especially little boys, are enamored with knights, dragons, and castles. These pictures have a medieval Art/Old English look, which lends authenticity to the book. Children interested in this subject will appreciate the illustrations that match the themes.

Goodreads' book review calls *Saint George and the Dragon* "the perfect way to introduce a classic tale to a whole new generation of readers" ("Saint George and the Dragon"). Indeed, this book has the ability to do just that, placing it solidly in the pantheon of the Caldecott Award winners.

Genre: Juvenile literature

Subject: Saint George, dragons, knights and knighthood

Age: 6+

1986. *The Polar Express*. Written and illustrated by Chris Van Allsburg.

It would be an injustice not to delve into great detail regarding this title, for this Caldecott book's impact is substantial. It is said to be one of the most popular Caldecott

books of all time.

*The Polar Express* is an old-time steam train that escorts children to the North Pole. This train travels on Christmas Eve. When the children arrive, they are met by a myriad of elves prior to seeing Santa. The main character, a little boy (who interestingly does not have a name, allowing the reader more space for fantasy) is singled out among the other children with the privilege of asking for anything he wishes from Santa, “the first gift of Christmas” (Van Allsburg). He humbly asks for a bell from the reindeer sleigh. On the way home the precious bell is lost, which is depicted in the illustration of the little boy on the train ride back. On Christmas morning, when the boy is opening his gifts, he finds a surprise gift: the gift is the bell with a note from Mr. C. (Claus).

Van Allsburg stated, “When I started *The Polar Express*, I thought I was writing about a train trip, but the story was actually about faith and the desire to believe in something” (“1986 Caldecott Medal”). Perhaps this is one of many attributes that makes it so well received year after year by children and adults alike. This story touches upon an intangible in life. In fact, this book has garnered ongoing worldwide popularity: “This award-winning story has become a family read aloud classic in homes the world over at Christmas time” (Eccleshare 332). In an interview with NASA, Van Allsburg said:

“Sometimes when your children are very young, you can see the world through their eyes and have that child-like sense of wonder. Sometimes they force you into being an adult: and then you can’t keep it. I think a little bit of the sense of wonder is a desire to escape the present, or the real world. That fantasy is actually a way to see the world how you’d like it to be, rather than seeing the way it is, and that’s a bit of an inspiration. It’s also the whole idea of believing in things that are

not quite possible.” (qtd. in Hitt)

The following passage by Eccleshare underscores the ability of this book to challenge readers of all ages to see the world with a sense of childlike wonder:

The mother of the boy admires the bell but laments that it is broken, although the boy and his sister can, in fact, hear it loud and clear. At the end, the boy-narrator-turned-adult tells readers: “Though I’ve grown old, the bell still rings for me, as it does for all who truly believe” (*The Polar Express*). This first- person story makes it all the more earnest and believable for children, the atmospheric illustrations of the night scenes as the North Pole will mesmerize them as they learn, once again, to believe in magic. (322.)

In Van Allsburg’s Caldecott Medal acceptance speech he explains his creative process:

I did not find that illustrating a story has the same quality of discovery as writing it. As I consider a story, I see it quite clearly. Illustrating is simply a matter of drawing something I’ve already experienced in my mind’s eye. Because I see the story unfold as if it were on film, that challenge is deciding precisely which moment should be illustrated and from which points of view. The struggle to master a medium, whether it words, notes, paint, or marble, is the heroic part of making art. (“1986 Caldecott Medal”)

Van Allsburg’s mastery of perspective is his ability to show many vantage points. Not only are these drawings exceptional in and of themselves, but also the use of perspective guides the spectator exactly to the point of interest. For example, the vantage point in viewing Santa’s sleigh in the sky fosters intimacy, as the viewers feel as if they are there



with Santa—up close and personal. Another example shows two children trying to comfort the little boy who realizes that he had lost his bell the gift from Santa. The vantage point of the little boy and friends quickly establishes intimacy and empathy.

The ALA praised Van Allsburg for his art:

“His horizontal book design and formal text placement are flawless, and reproduction of the full color art exhibits a mastery of implied texture that is as close an imitation of real texture as a two-dimensional work could be expected to be. Feathery falling snow and Santa’s beard and downy mittens are the best examples of implication of texture throughout the book, accomplished, the artist has said, by the interplay between an oil pastel medium and pastel paper itself as support medium.” (qtd. in Lacy 137)

While critical acclaim is important for a book, ultimately, a children’s book must spark the imaginations and touch the hearts of its readers in order to be successful. As much as—or perhaps even more than—the other Caldecott books, Van Allsburg’s *The Polar Express* does just that.

The book is a publishing phenomenon, having sold 12 million copies worldwide. It was a *New York Times* bestseller and made *the New York Times Best Illustrated Book List*. This book is sure to live on year after year during Christmastime. In 2015, *The Polar Express* was made into a large 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition, *The Polar Express Holiday Gift Set*, including the book, DVD, keepsake sleigh bell, CD, and collectible posters. *The Polar Express Deluxe Gift Set* includes Anniversary Hardcover book, bell, and audio CD.

In 2004, the book was released as a movie, with record-breaking success. This 3-

dimensional computer-animated, musical fantasy film (based on the 1985 book) “grossed \$310,600,000 worldwide (other data reported it to exceed \$431,000,000) and was later listed in the 2006 Guinness World Book of Records as the first all-digital Capture film” (*Variety*). The movie starred Tom Hanks, and was written, produced, and directed by Robert Zemeckis. Chris Van Allsburg also served as one of the executive producers of the film. The film was nominated in 2004 for three Oscars and had its network TV premiere on ABC on December 1, 2006. The TV premiere brought in 13.2 million viewers, winning its time slot and ranking 20<sup>th</sup> in the Nielsen ratings that week (*TV Tango*). In 2008, the American Film Institute nominated *The Polar Express* for its Top 10 Animated Films List.

As previously noted in the *Jumanji* section, Van Allsburg was the recipient of his first Caldecott for *Jumanji* (1982). His *The Garden of Abdul Gasazi* (1980) is a Caldecott Honor Book. In 1993, Van Allsburg was awarded the Regina Medal for lifetime achievement in Children’s Literature.

This book also inspired *The Polar Express* Train Rides for children. Children can experience a real-life version of *The Polar Express*. “Railroad Across The US” offers this experience with hot chocolate, sing-along, Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, and more. *The Polar Express* exclusively licenses some of these train rides. Guests are encouraged to wear their Christmas jammies (just like the kids in the movie) for the ride! There are numerous locations that offer *The Polar Express* ride. There are many other versions of the train ride that are not licensed by *The Polar Express*. They all are more or less a train ride, where Mr. and Mrs. Claus promenade through the train and serve some version of a snack. These train rides vary in cost; however, a ride for two adults and one child can

cost approximately \$300.00 (*Family Vacation Critic*).

The Caldecott books have the potential to generate such revenue for the illustrator and the industry; in this case, “Van Allsburg’s net worth is 10 million” (*Celebrity Net Worth*). Even if *The Polar Express* had not won a Caldecott, it surely would have seen some success.

Van Allsburg’s setting for the book is based on his childhood home in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He said that *The Polar Express* was the easiest of his picture book manuscripts to write. He created only one draft and had to make only a few changes to the text:

Van Allsburg said he realized after *Express* was finished that he was thinking of the work of Caspar David Friedrich, considered one of Germany’s most gifted artists of the Romantic period in the early nineteenth century, a painter whose landscapes often contained small figures rendered symbolically insignificant in the solemn and silent presence of nature. Also in Friedrich’s paintings can the stark contrast of light and dark created by specific sources of illumination be seen to have influenced some of Van Allsburg’s illustrations for *Express*. (Lacy 137)

Genre: fiction, fantasy

Subject: Polar Express, North Pole, Christmas Eve, and Santa Claus, having faith, believing in something

Age: 4+

1987. *Hey, Al*. Illustrated by Richard Egielski, written by Arthur Yorinks.

Al the janitor and his dog, Eddie, live in a crowded single room on the West Side

of New York. Although once very happy, life now seems to have become a constant struggle. Their room is getting too small, and despite at one time the two being inseparable, Eddie and the janitor are getting on each other's nerves. One day a large exotic bird comes into their life through the window and offers to transport Al and Eddie to a gorgeous island in the sky. Once there, they are turned into half-bird and half-human figures. Although the place is paradise, the novelty wears off and they long to return home. They begin their return, and on their way, catastrophe strikes and they get separated. In the end, they reunite and return with the realization that there's no place like home. The morals of this story are the grass is not greener on the other side and there is no place like home.

The illustrations combine the unexpected with the ordinary. In one of the pictures, Eddie is in the bathroom shaving with his loyal dog nearby when an exotic bird bursts through the window into the bathroom. The bird is very colorful, while the rest of the colors are mundane browns (perhaps, indicative of their lives). The muted colors in the beginning of the book sharply contrast with the vibrant colors of the exotic bird and paradise.

The reviews of *Hey, Al* were split, as some reviewers loved it and others questioned the merits of this book's Caldecott Award. *Hey, Al* may have been a "miss" by the committee, as Kathleen Horn states: "The selection left most people scratching their heads, wondering what made this book the most distinguished picture book of the year. It may have caused some to wonder what the word distinguished meant to the 1987 Caldecott committee. According to ALSC's official Terms and Criteria, *distinguished* is defined as:

Marked by eminence and distinction; noted for significant achievement.

Marked by excellence and quality.

Marked by conspicuous excellence or eminence.

In other words, distinguished.

“This is clearly an adult fantasy. . . . They may have regarded *Hey, Al* as part of a tradition of Caldecott Medal Books (by artists such as Bemelmans, Sendak, Emberley, and Steig) that offer a subtext for adults” (Horning “Hey, Al”). However, the illustrations depicting paradise contrast with the rest of the illustrations so vividly that they are sure to be noticed by children, and this book does speak to children as well as adults.

Though *Hey, Al* did receive mixed reviews, the Caldecott committee is open-minded in questioning the following variables at hand. As Horning explains:

After seventy-five years of awarding the Caldecott Medal, we are still discussing how we define the term *picture book*, who the audience is, whether the Caldecott winner will-or should-stand the test of time, whether the choices are driven by politics, or many other issues. These issues have led us to question the award terms, definitions, selection process, committee composition, and even the very meaning of distinguished. But any shortcomings we perceive in the Caldecott Medal itself are far outweighed by the award’s greatest strengths - that the terms and definitions are open enough that they allow for interpretation as picture books themselves change. Even if that means we get the occasional quirky choice.

(“Hey, Al”)

This passage shows that the Caldecott Committee is fluid and open to exploring growth and change. The selection of *Hey, Al* as a winner demonstrates this fluidity.

Genre: comedy, action/adventure

Subject: moral reasoning, be thankful for what you have

Age: 4+

1988. *Owl Moon*. Illustrated by John Schoenherr, written by Jane Yolen.

*Owl Moon*'s poetic narrative describes a heartwarming adventure of a child and father. They venture out to the forest in the still of the winter night looking for the great horned owl. One evening, while echoing the sound of an owl, whoo-who, they spot one. It is so much more than what the daughter had expected, and she then understands the depth of the experience of which her father had spoken: "No wind blew; the trees stood still and the sky shone. The moon illuminates the dark sky" (*Owl Moon*). The adventure is simplistic, yet means so much to the child; it represents a time shared with her dad, a magical moment when time stands still, and a reverence for the wonder of nature.

Schoenherr agreed to illustrate *Owl Moon*, as he felt that he knew owls and animals intimately because they lived in the woods that surrounded his own family farm in New Jersey. This story is really a biographical amalgam of the many nighttime trips he and his daughter Amy had together. On the last page, the child says, "If you go owling, you don't need words or warm or anything but hope" (Yolen). Schoenherr's own experience with his daughter reflected this reality, and he projects it into his illustrations, thereby bringing this truth to the readers.

The illustrations are watercolor washes. Watercolor is a transparent paint of pigment mixed with water. A wash is a usually watercolor, either ink or paint, diluted with water and applied to a surface. The subjects are the owl, the child, and the father in

the distance among the picturesque landscapes.

Schoenherr was a noted wildlife artist and illustrated other animal stories, such as *Rascal* by Sterling North (1963), a Newbery Honor Book; *Gentle Ben* by Walt Morey (1965); *The Wolfling: A Documentary Novel of the Eighteen-Seventies* (1969); and *Julie of the Wolves* by Jean Craighead George (1972). Schoenherr writes, “The main interest of this story was in the feelings of the little girl, and that feeling of meeting wildness that I treasured” (“John Schoenherr” 179).

*Owl Moon* has been translated into nine languages, including French, German, Chinese, and Korean. *Owl Moon* was awarded a Reading Rainbow book, a Junior Literary Guild selection, and was placed on dozens of state awards lists. The book was one of *Yankee Magazine’s 100 Classic New England Children’s Books*. It was also on the *Kentucky Bluegrass Master List* and was a 1991 *North Dakota Flickertail Award* nominee. *Owl Moon* has also inspired a song by the musician Bruce O’Brian: “Owl Moon” (2016).

Patricia Lee Gauch (former vice president and editor at large of Philomel Books) edited three Caldecott books: *Owl Moon*, *So You Want to Be President?*, and *Lon Po Po*, and poignantly described Schoenherr’s work: “The ability to see and then to capture in an illustration or painting not only what is obvious in the world around us but also what is silent and sometimes hidden is so clearly a mark of John’s work” (460).

Genre: realistic fiction

Subject: science, winter, father, forest animals, determination, magical adventure, a respect for nature, bond between child and father

Age: 3+

1989. *Song and Dance Man*. Illustrated by Stephen Gammell, written by Karen Ackerman.

One afternoon when visiting their grandpa, three grandchildren go with him to the attic. When there, he takes out an old trunk full of his vaudeville costume (tap shoes, bowler hat, and cane). After getting in character with his costume, he then re-creates his vaudeville act of song, dance, and jokes. The children are very entertained, while wondering if he doesn't miss the old days. The little girl asks him, "If you stopped, do you feel happy or sad?" Grandpa's reaction provides the answer - sad (Ackerman). This story bridges the gap of generations and to grandparents past. *Song and Dance Man* encourages children to ponder what grandmas and grandpas were like in their prime years. It opens up dialogue for them and insight into a time that they will never directly experience.

The colorful colored pencil drawings capture the happiness of Grandpa's performance and the children's excitement as their grandpa performs for them.

Genre: fiction, historical

Subject: family history, grandparents, song and dance, dance, theatre, vaudeville stage, actors, performers, nostalgia, magic tricks, American history

Age: 4+

### **Caldecott Books—1990s**

During the 1990s, more than in any other decade up until this point, the way the world communicated began to change. Cell phones and the internet began their rapid rise to prominence. As a corollary to these changes, the Caldecott books in the 1990s



provided different layouts, experiments among interrelated stories, and wordless stories to allow the reader to read the book in his or her own way. The strains of assimilation into a new world, urban violence, war and monsters, fairy tales enhanced by art history, and the science of snowflakes were all addressed in the Caldecott books of the 1990s.

1990. *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China*. Translated and illustrated by Ed Young.

The dedication of the book seems to be apologetic to the wolves: “To all the wolves of the world for lending their good name as a tangible symbol for our darkness” (*Lon Po Po*). “His *Lon Po Po* dedication,” Hammond and Nordstrom note, “indicates that he thinks wolves are not intrinsically bad or evil, even though that is how they are portrayed in children’s literature” (119). An illustration accompanying the dedication helps to reveal the motivation behind the dedication: “To the right of the dedication against a yellow background, the illustration of a wolf, similar to the cover illustration, morphs into a human. The wolf within a human form symbolizes dark or evil tendencies within each of us” (Hammond and Nordstrom 119).

This Chinese version (set in China) of *Little Red Riding Hood* adds a twist of Chinese culture coupled with traditional Chinese Art. Three children are left home alone when their mother leaves overnight to spend time with her mother on her birthday. A wolf pretending to be their Po Po (Grandmother) cons his way into the house. The girls come to realize that he is not their Po Po. They outwit him by tantalizing him over the excellence of Ginkgo nuts, and the wolf’s greed leads to his demise. The illustrations have a haunting-mysterious look due to his use of mostly dark colors. In keeping with

ancient paintings of the Chinese, the illustrations are grouped in panels in a two-picture sequence; some in this story are divided into three pictures for a bigger picture. Young's unique feature in *Lon Po Po* is his use of panel art, which allows the illustrator to show different perspectives simultaneously: "Young's adaptation comes from an ancient oral tradition that is similar to the European version that was popularized by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm" (Eccleshare 343). Young's style of art is impressionistic and realistic, and the media used are watercolors and pastels.

The colors depicted in the illustrations help convey the emotions of the girls' fears with dark colors at the beginning of the story. As their courage changes, the colors switch to brighter blue, green, rose, and yellow hues, which is typical of Chinese art. Young expands on the relationship between text and pictures in the following: "A Chinese painting is often accompanied by words; they are complementary. There are things that words do that pictures never can, and likewise, there are images that words can never describe" (qtd. in *Vicki Blackwell*). Young adds, "Before I am involved with a project I must be moved, and as I try something exciting, I grow. It is my purpose to stimulate growth in the reader as an active participant as well," and explains, "I feel the story has to be exciting, and a moving experience for a child" (qtd. in "2016 Lifetime Achievement Award"). His illustrations go a long way in accomplishing these goals.

For his detailed depictions of the wolf, drawn with such accuracy, Young studied their characteristics: how they move, how they use their tail, and how they act when they are frightened. His research also included listening to audio sounds of them. Illustrations of the wolf vary in the story in that the wolf somewhat morphs into a human shape. This reflects continuity between the book's dedication and the story itself. The illustrations

convey the message.

Lon Po Po is an example of showing how different cultures vary in what they choose to explore in children's literature. This point is similar to what Maurice Sendak suggests: that he did not want to shelter children from the realities of life. Young's sentiment also brings forth how different cultures vary. In China, children are less protected in terms of what is considered an adult story. Young was surprised when he began working in the field to find that American publishers discouraged stories with sad endings. No unpleasant issues. "“They don't want children to confront some of the realities of death and prejudiced of any kind of unpleasant issues,”” he said. ““I always find children much more sophisticated than people suppose”” (qtd. in Lombardi).

Genre: Fairy tale

Subject: A version of Little Red Riding Hood, Chinese painting, ginkgo nuts, wolves (symbolic for an evil an evil source).

Age: 4+

1991. *Black and White*. Written and illustrated by David Macaulay.

On the inside book cover the following warning appears: “This book appears to contain a number of stories that do not necessarily occur at the same time. Then again, it may contain only one story. In any event, careful inspection of both words and pictures is recommended.” This description or introduction does not do the book justice, since the book is so unique. It is a must on all libraries', teachers', and parents' lists.

The layout of the book has not been seen in any other prior Caldecott Medal winner, so to label it unique is an understatement. What makes this layout so special is

that each time readers turn the page, they encounter four separate stories being told simultaneously, with each double-page spread divided into quadrants. The stories are independent of one another and yet part of the whole. Thus, the interaction among the four stories creates a fifth. Some illustrations are strictly pictures, while others include text. The intermingling of episodes is sure to challenge the reader, for this is not a passive book, and therefore one has to put the puzzle together. This layout experiments with time and simultaneous events, and each individual story encroaches on the others. The names of the stories are “Seeing Things,” “A Waiting Game,” “Problem Parents,” and “Udder Chaos.” Eventually the stories all intermingle providing several levels of reality. I would venture to say that any child old enough to understand would be captivated by this format, coupled with the entertaining stories. *Black and White* uses text and pictures in unexpected ways. In fact, it has been said that “No other writer for adults or children explores this unusual territory the way Macaulay does” (Publishers Weekly).

Macaulay has acquired international acclaim. His books have also been translated into many different languages. Some of his other books are *City* (1974); *Pyramid* (1975); *Castle* (Caldecott Honor Award) (1977); *Cathedral* (Caldecott Honor Award) (1977); *Unbuilding* (1980); *Mill* (1983); and *Mosque* (2003), which depicts the design and construction of Ottoman-style masjid. The 9/11 attacks motivated Macaulay to create *Mosque*, as he wanted to show how the traditions of major religions have more in common than they have dividing them. His books *The Way Things Work* (1967); *Underground* (1976); *Shortcut* (1995); *Rome Antics* (1997); *The New Way Things Work* (1998); and *Building Big* (2000), the companion book to the PBS series, are beautifully illustrated and present an architect’s view. Five of his titles, *Cathedral*, *Castle*, *City*,

*Pyramid*, and *Mill* have been made into popular PBS television programs and artwork exhibitions.

In addition to the Caldecott Medal and Honor Awards, Macaulay has received numerous other awards: MacArthur Fellows Program Award, The Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, The Christopher Award, and an American Institute of Architects Medal for his outstanding illustrations and record of architectural accomplishments. His books combine elements of architecture, design and engineering. They are rendered in precise detail. His books have sold more than two million copies in the United States alone besides being translated into a dozen languages. These books are the “go to” for a child-adolescent who has an interest in architecture and science, along with other similar subjects. Macaulay combines detailed visuals that present the text. These stories truly challenge the reader in a whole new way that never existed before. *Black and White* changed the perception of what a book is. In today’s fast-paced visual world of electronics, *Black and White*’s innovation in illustration and presentation can compete with the flashiest devices.

*Time* magazine once wrote, ““What he draws he draws better than any other pen-and-ink illustrator in the world”” (qtd. in “Macaulay, David”).

Genre: picture book, fiction

Subject: trains, parents, newspapers, adults at train being creative, waiting for something,

Holstein cows

Age: 4+

1992: *Tuesday*. Written and illustrated by David Wiesner.

*Tuesday* is one of a few Caldecott Award books that is wordless. Wiesner is one of the most innovative authors and illustrators of his day. The fact that he won three Caldecott Award Medals between 1992 and 2007 speaks for itself. Wiesner explained in his Caldecott Medal acceptance speech for *Tuesday* what a wordless picture book means to him: “A wordless picture book offers a different kind of experience. . . . Each viewer reads the book in his or her own way. . . . As a result, there are as many versions of what happened that Tuesday night as there are readers” (qtd. in Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 38).

*Tuesday* is wordless except for when it provides dates and times. *Noah’s Ark* by Peter Spier (1978) had long wordless stretches, but the only other wordless books in this category are *Flotsam* (2007), also by Wiesner; *The Lion and the Mouse* by Jack Pinkney (2010); and *A Ball for Daisy* by Chris Raschka (2012). Brian Selznick’s *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* has an unprecedented number of pictures back to back without words but is different from the above category.

This book is unique with Wiesner’s use of computer graphics in creating some of the sequences. The green and blue frogs fly through the sky, taking up every bit of emotional space of the page. The repeated use of blues and greens in the background adds to the intensity, as the images seem intertwined. The frogs convey a sense of movement, for they appear to have the mobility to pop out of the page at any moment as they levitate through the air.

This story begins on a Tuesday evening, around eight. All is quiet in the town, except for the frogs. The frogs sit on their lily pads and levitate magically into the night,

causing havoc by upsetting the dogs, flying through a grandmother's window into her house, and flying through clothes on a clothesline. They are just having fun and appear to be very friendly. As the sun rises, the flying lily pads and frogs stop moving and fall back down to Earth. An investigation is started by the people in the neighborhood as to why there are lily pads all over the road. The last page of the story shows pigs starting to take flight. Wiesner's choice in choosing Tuesday as the day of the week for the action to take place is significant: Wiesner chose Tuesday in part because he thought it sounded like "Ooze Day" (Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 44). Generally, Tuesday is thought of as a non-descript day. A mundane day of the week now takes flight, literally and figuratively.

Wiesner often uses watercolors for his illustrations. Watercolor can be very challenging as a medium, since it immediately records each stroke of the brush's intensity of color and line. Watercolor has transparency and can be manipulated depending on the amount of water placed on the brush in conjunction to the amount of pigment (paint). Wiesner's watercolors are precise in line, color, and form. The richly textured watercolors, without ink lines, are predominantly dark values of blue and green, which provide an air of mystery to the moonlit night. His artistic style is seen as realistic and surrealistic. Wiesner methodically studies his whimsical frogs with precision. In fact, "His frogs are rendered so realistically that they appear to be photographs" (Hammond and Nordstrom 210). Further, Wiesner carefully studied the anatomy of frogs before illustrating this fanciful book: "Each frog is anatomically correct. Wisner sculpted a clay model of a frog while working on *Tuesday* and also consulted photographs. Each frog has its own distinctive skinned pattern" (210).

Wiesner appeared on *The Today Show* the morning after learning that he received

the Caldecott Award for *Tuesday*. After winning a Caldecott, the trajectory an illustrator's career changes overnight. *Tuesday* went on to sell half a million copies in the United States and was published in a dozen foreign countries.

The author/illustrator has won Caldecott Medals for *Tuesday* (1992), *The Three Pigs* (2002), and *Flotsam* (2007). Wiesner has also won Caldecott Honors for *Free Fall* (1989), *Sector 7* (2000), and *Mr. Wuffles!* (2014). His publisher explains Wiesner's ongoing appeal as a writer and illustrator of children's books:

He has always been intrigued by and curious about what comes before and after the captured image. His books somehow convey the sequence of thoughts leading up to and following each picture, and that quality explains why they are frequently described as cinematic. Wiesner spends several years working on each new book, becoming completely absorbed in the artistic and creative process. Once published, his books are often included in classroom settings as creative springboards for art, writing, and even drama lessons. In addition, they are used by ESL classes, allowing students to express themselves creatively while being free from the pressures of having to translate words literally. ("Press Release")

To date, Wiesner has illustrated more than twenty award-winning books for young readers. Two of the picture books that he wrote and illustrated became instant classics when they won the prestigious Caldecott Medal, *Tuesday* (1992) and *The Three Pigs* (2002). An exhibit of Wiesner's original artwork, "Seeing the Story," toured the United States in 2000 and 2001. Among his many honors, Wiesner holds the Japan Picture Book Award for *Tuesday*, the Prix Sorcierres (the French equivalent of the Caldecott Medal) for *The Three Pigs*, and a 2004 IBBY (International Board on Books



for Young People). He remains one of the best loved and highly acclaimed picture book creators in the world.

Genre: fiction, comedy, adventure, fantasy

Subject: frogs

Age: 5+

1993. *Mirette on the High Wire*. Written and illustrated by Emily Arnold McCully.

*Mirette on the High Wire* takes place in France. Mirette meets Bellini when he comes to stay at the boarding house that her mother runs. Mirette, from outside her window, secretly watches him practicing. With his help she eventually learns how to walk a tightrope herself. Through their friendship, Mirette and Bellini help each other in overcoming doubt and reclaiming courage.

This story is historical fiction based on the real performer, Henry Bellini. Bellini performed many daring tightrope walks, with his first major performance in 1873, when he walked over Niagara River using a 1,500-foot rope. This tightrope walk across Niagara River ended with a dramatic leap into the raging river below.

The text in this story highlights some of his entertaining feats. An agent also renting a room mentions to a mime “Why, the great Bellini! Didn’t you know he was in the room at the back? Bellini . . . the one who crossed Niagara Falls on 1000-foot wire in 10 minutes?” (*Mirette on the High Wire*). His showmanship is legendary, and it makes an appearance in the book when the mime recounts a Bellini performance “And on the way back stopped in the middle to cook an omelette on a stove full of live coals. Then he opened a bottle of champagne and toasted the crowd” (*Mirette on the High Wire*). The

sweeping watercolor illustrations show a unique vantage point from above, highlighting the beautiful landscape of the Paris rooftops in the nineteenth century. The colors are used strategically to show the mood of the illustrations, in conveying the joy or the uncertainty of what's ahead. For example, the brighter wisps show free spirit while the darker colors convey uncertainty.

*Mirette on the High Wire* (1993) and *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* (2004) are perfect Caldecott books for a teacher to use for a compare and contrast assignment. Students will surely find Bellini's performances and the illustrations in *Mirette on the High Wire* riveting. The live footage can be seen on a Tablet by searching under Bellini or Niagara Falls, as they seem to be interchangeable. The possibilities are endless, for a teacher can use this book to teach about science, entertainment, and other subjects. *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* shows a tightrope walker whose walk took on a different meaning after the tragedy of 9/11.

Originally McCully intended this book as a biography of Bellini. It appears that she related to his sense of daring, as she was a tree climber in her youth. A child can relate to an image of another child (Mariette's character), as she is the link to Bellini. This book's story, historical background, and illustrative perspective collaborate to spark children's imaginations and desire to learn more about colorful historical figures.

Genre: historical fiction

Subject: Paris, The Great Bellini, little girl having persistence to achieve her goal, positive female role, focus and discipline, high wire, boarding house, European heritage.

Age: 4+

Additional information: YouTube has footage of Bellini and other daring men and

women performing. “Niagara Falls Daredevils -Walking the Wire”

1994. *Grandfather's Journey*, illustrated by Allen Say, text edited by Walter Lorraine

*Grandfather's Journey* is a story of a Japanese immigrant's journey to America. Say, the author, recounts his memories of his maternal grandfather's journey when he came to the United States from Japan as a young man. After traveling all over America, the grandfather settled in California. The seacoast reminded him of his home in Japan. He returned to Japan, and then returned to, and married in, California. After having a daughter, he and his family returned to Japan. He loved both countries and frequently missed the other when not there. His daughter married and had a son, Allen Say. After Allen grew up, he came to America to see what his grandfather had loved and talked about. Allen resides in California, but never forgot his heritage. *Grandfather's Journey* is told as Say remembers his grandfather's life and his coming to America. The creative process of the author/illustrator varies, although many other Caldecott Medal winners seem to have the same process as Say: “He combines the text only when all the paintings are finished” (Hammond and Nordstrom 47).

The illustrations view like a photograph album, which makes sense since it is Say's recounting of his own family history: it is his imaginative rendering of his family album. The illustrations are outlined with precise, thin lines to frame each illustration. The renderings are set upon cream pages with wide margins. In an interesting artistic choice, “The focal point of most of the artwork is just off center, which visually expresses the underlying disequilibrium of restless and rootless characters” (Hammond and Nordstrom 46).

Say was a professional photographer for twenty years. His expertise is clearly infused into this photographic book style, as seen in the strategic use of light and shadow in the portrait pictures. The use of light creates a mood and highlights a focal point.

The watercolor paintings are each framed with a thin black line and set apart from the text by the use of white space. The text is not embellished, just straightforward—leaving space for a child to read between the lines. The portraits of grandfather are drawn realistically, conveying much emotion, honesty, and reverence. One sees him in a moment in time; grandfather sits portrait style in his traditional Japanese clothing, while another picture shows him in his European clothes on a boat as he is crossing the Pacific. The clothing speaks volumes in conveying his journey. The portraits have an intimacy about them, as the viewer feels that he is seeing a person's private moment. They bring to mind Edward Hopper's portraits. Hopper captured the isolation of an individual. Hopper and Say intimate in their art the psychological inner aspect of humanness.

The Caldecott Committee celebrates Say's artistic technique in this way: "Exquisite watercolors portray vast landscape along with intimate family portraits that communicate hope, dignity, sadness, and love. Say powerfully connects the personal and the universal to create a rare harmony of longing and belonging" ("1994 Caldecott Medal Winner").

Genre: historical fiction, realistic style

Subject: cross-cultural family, immigration, assimilation, cultural identity, exploration of geography

Age: 4+

1995. *Smoky Night*. Illustrated by David Diaz, written by Eve Bunting.

A young boy, Daniel; his mother; and a cat all huddle together and watch a riot (in Los Angeles) from their apartment window as looters roam the streets. They evacuate when their building begins to burn, but in leaving they discover that Jasmine, the cat, has disappeared and Mrs. Kim, their neighbor, is also missing her cat. Mrs. Kim and Daniel's mother do not associate with each other. Mrs. Kim has a shop and even though she is local Daniel and his mother don't shop at her store, as they prefer to stay with their own kind. Mrs. Kim is disliked because of cultural differences. The community gathers at a shelter to escape the riots, and soon thereafter a firefighter walks in with Jasmine and Mrs. Kim's cat. To their surprise, they learn that the cats were hiding together. This opens dialogue between Mrs. Kim and Daniel and his mother.

The story brings forth issues young people may be confronted with and presents a child's-eye view of the Los Angeles riots. The cats serve to provide friendly images for the children reading the book and help in tempering the harsh storyline, bring the families together, and are the catalysts in teaching the humans a lesson about getting along.

The pieces depicted in the photo-collage art complement the storyline and reflect the chaos of the riot, as the art is coarse and at times jagged. Other areas depicted differently reflect the warmth of the community. The people and objects are encased with thick black outlines, and some are depicted in a cubist manner. Diaz's collages coupled with the encasement present a new view of collage. They create a strong visual 3-D look. As *Publishers Weekly's* reviewer noted,

Diaz's dazzling mixed-media collages superimpose bold acrylic illustrations on photographs of carefully arranged backgrounds that feature a wide array of

symbolic materials—from scraps of paper and shards of broken glass to spilled rice and plastic dry-cleaner bags. Interestingly, Diaz doesn't strongly differentiate the presumably Asian American Mrs. Kim from the African American characters—even the artwork here cautions the reader against assumptions about race.

(“Smoky Night”)

*Smoky Night* made the list of 100 books that shaped the century, compiled by the staff at the School Library Journal. This picture book presents a new kind of genre with its serious subject's nature. The illustrations serve to further the book's message, challenging children reading the book to see seemingly disparate elements of illustration—and people—as part of a whole.

Genre: historical fiction

Subject: riots, urban violence, anger, stealing, violence, displacement, shelter, prejudice; morals: right and wrong, friendships, culturally stereotyping, the cats' unbiased friendship

Age: 5+

1996. *Officer Buckle and Gloria*. Written and illustrated by Peggy Rathmann.

Officer Buckle is the information officer who visits schools to teach about safety. He comes to Napville's (don't overlook the name here and its relevance to Officer Buckle) elementary school regularly, but the children always ignore him because he is dull. Things change when he brings a police dog named Gloria with him. They work as a team; Gloria performs tricks while Officer Buckle speaks. The children are very receptive to Gloria, and soon the team gets numerous requests to come to their schools, with even

colleges requesting the duo. Officer Buckle, however, feels jealous because the children are responding only to Gloria's charismatic personality, and he quits. Fortunately, in the end they work out their differences and team-up again. Gloria is just another instance in the long line of dogs used in the Caldecott books, as dogs are a relatable image.

Former chair of the Caldecott Committee, Julie Cummings, explains the deservingness of *Office Buckle*:

Peggy Rathmann knows what appeals to a child audience in her talk to the lively antics of police dog Gloria and the earnest Safety Officer Buckle. . . . Rathmann integrates, picture, text, and total design into a united whole. Gloria's irrelevant acrobatics behind Buckle's back contrast with the officer's strait-laced safety tips to school audiences. The original, lively, and energetic art leads the reader through a story of cooperation and friendship. The cartoon style watercolor and ink illustrations employ brilliant colors that, combined with a creative use of white space, engage the reader in the humor and warmth of this stellar performance. ("1996 Caldecott Medal and Honor Books")

Rathmann describes *Officer Buckle and Gloria* as a

“‘picture-dependent book’ because the illustrations carry much of the narrative. Gloria grows to become more of an attraction than Office Buckle, but Gloria's clowning is never described in words, only shown in the illustrations. This meets the Caldecott criterion of ‘delineation of plot, theme, characters, setting, mood or information through the pictures.’ The vibrant watercolors and cartoons style is a perfect match for the slapstick humor of the book and meets the Caldecott criteria of ‘appropriateness of style of illustration to the story, theme or a concept,’ and

‘excellence of presentation in recognition of a child audience.’” (Hammond and Nordstrom 150)

Rathmann has said that her family’s dog did naughty things while no one was watching and was an influence on her writing. On Rathmann’s website she relates the story of the time her mother was being videotaped in the dining room, and the dog was licking all the poached eggs on the buffet behind her. Neither her mother nor the cameraman noticed. Filming continued while the family ate breakfast and commented on the delicious eggs. “‘The first time we watched that tape we were so shocked,’ Rathmann recalled, ‘we couldn’t stop laughing’” (“Caldecott Medal Acceptance Speech” 151).

Genre: fiction

Subject: safety, police, police dogs, envy

Age: 4+

1997. *Golem*. Retold and illustrated by David Wisniewski.

David Wisniewski’s *Golem* is a dramatic retelling of the Jewish folktale. The story is set in the year 1580 in Prague. It has deep roots in history, religion, and legend. *Golem* is an animated anthropomorphic being that is created by inanimate matter; it is made from clay to protect the Jews of Prague from anti-Semites. Some reviewers cautioned against the violence and medieval content shown in this book, in that these elements may frighten young children. However, these elements are fitting to this story. *Golem*, like *Smoky Night*, has a heavy nature, since it deals with a subject matter that is not light hearted and it addresses violence. It discusses the persecution of the Jews in Prague and displays the violent way the Golem dispatches enemies. This book can be a



helpful resource for teaching children about the Holocaust. Wisniewski presents a very serious subject in a way that is reachable to children. As reviewed by *Kirkus Reviews*, “Wisniewski exposes the slander that was embraced and wildly promulgated during the Holocaust years. In Wisniewski’s story, the Golem turns back the rampaging masses who want to destroy the Jews of Prague and is eventually returned to the clay from which he sprang” (“Golem”). The author is conscious of conveying history to children, including in the book an endnote about the history and influence of the legend.

Caldecott books are traditionally of a lighter nature, although *Golem*, *Smoky Night* (1995), and *Shadow* (1983) won over numerous other contenders that were being considered. This shows that new subject matter is evolving, acceptable, and increasingly being considered by the Caldecott Committee. To compare *Golem*’s and *Smoky Night*’s subjects to the subject of *Where the Wild Things Are* (1964) and to consider the controversy that Sendak’s book stirred shows a huge shift in what was deemed acceptable for the day. *Golem*’s deeper meaning can be interpreted religiously, in that people, like Golem, return to dust as he did, when they die. There are many philosophical ramifications to this story.

The multi-layer cut-paper collages are placed in layers to give shadow and depth; they appear to be 3-D. The pictures are very dramatic and bold in color, highlighting the serious nature of the subject matter.

Genre: folktale

Subject: Jewish folktales, giants, history, horror, magic, monsters, religion, violence, war, persecution, Prague, supernatural, intolerance, death

Age: 8+

1998. *Rapunzel*. Retold and illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky.

Once upon a time there was a happily married couple that was sad, because they longed for a child so they could become parents. One day they learn the good news that the woman is pregnant. Everything is fine until the woman sees herbs in the sorceress's garden and asks her husband to get some. The sorceress catches the husband doing this, and she makes him promise to give his first-born child to her. The sorceress raises the infant Rapunzel and imprisons her in a tower. The prince in the story discovers a way to see Rapunzel by climbing her long hair and eventually they marry in the tower. When the sorceress finds out, she is livid. In revenge she cuts Rapunzel's hair and throws her out of the tower. Rapunzel and the prince reunite in spite of his blindness, caused by the sorceress. Their love saves them as Rapunzel's tears cure the Prince's blindness and he and Rapunzel live happily ever after with their twins.

The richly detailed oil paint illustrations in this rendering of the classic fairy tale are magnificent and truly reminiscent of The Italian Renaissance period. When viewing the illustrations, readers might feel they are viewing an art history book. Zelinsky extensively researched the period to add authenticity and depicts with accuracy the details of the dress, architecture, and landscape. Intricate details of clothing, hair, and the facial expressions are expertly painted. Zelinsky also imitates the lighting of the master painters. The illustrations glow in golden tones and chiaroscuro, an artistic technique that originated during the Renaissance. As Zelinsky explains, it is “Drawing one side of an object pale, and the other side dark, to create the effect of a light shining on the object from one side” (qtd. in Cummins 91). Zelinsky paints formal scenes that are framed within white margins.

Zelinsky's retelling of fairy tales extends to the following, all of which were Caldecott celebrities: *Hansel and Gretel* (1984) Caldecott Honor; *Rumpelstiltskin* (1986) Caldecott Honor; *Rapunzel* (Caldecott Medal Award)—all tales from the Brothers Grimm; and *Swamp Angel* (1994) (Caldecott Honor).

Zelinsky's view on retelling fairy tales is, as he explained:

One thing I've realized from reading about folk tales is that there aren't "authentic" or "original" versions—there is no such thing. Stories are always in flux. Wherever a story comes from, it was the property of living storytellers who, even while repeating stories they knew, would be influenced by that, by others' stories. They might add a detail, or weave together strands of this one to make the story better, or to make a point. ("On Retelling Fairy Tales")

He continued, discussing his challenges and artistic choices:

So in setting out to make a picture book of, say, "*Rapunzel*," I had to be a storyteller of today. I could have set the table in any time or place, historically or widely fantastical. But I chose to make this setting about as real as possible, though not in the reality of today: rather, in Italy, in 1500, where people's clothes looked so wonderful, and there really were princes. All good fantasies are grounded in the non-fantastical. ("On Retelling Fairy Tales")

To Zelinsky, creation of the fantastic must be rooted in a good understanding of the realistic. His artwork in *Rapunzel* certainly reflects this conviction.

Zelinsky took great pains to perfect his craft, studying for years and looking for models in classic artwork. He reveals his inspiration for the detail of his artwork in crafting the prince's wardrobe in *Rapunzel*:

I was also looking for inspiration for what the prince would be wearing. I found it in a painting: *Altarpiece of the Saints Vincent, James and Eustace* by Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo. One of them was wearing a cape and I really liked the way it had sheepskin on the inside and velvet on the outside, but I couldn't tell from the reproduction what this piece of clothing would look like from the back. A stage designer friend put me in touch with a costume historian and we faxed back and forth." Zelinsky's inspiration for Rapunzel came by way of seeing a Rembrandt painting: *Portrait of Agatha Bas*. (Paul O. Zelinsky)

Beyond the detail of the prince's garments, Zelinsky painstakingly followed a method of imitating the Italian masters in order to create the overall artistic effect of *Rapunzel*. He eloquently explains his time-consuming process:

What makes these pictures look the way they do is as much technique and style, and I can't really tell you much about the smooth, round way of seeing shapes or the balance and placing design that I try to copy from the Italian Masters. But I can tell you how I sort of imitated their technique. The old master oil paintings were usually done in transparent oil colors on top of a black-and-white underpainting, which was often painted in egg temperas. My version of this technique was to start with a watercolor underpainting, which is fast drying like tempera, but I have an easier time controlling it. Then I seal the under painting with a coat of clear, matte acrylic medium. That keeps the oil paints, which come next, from soaking into the paper, where they would turn dull and flat. Instead, thin layers of transparent oil paint can be smoothed into glowing colors and bold, glossy surfaces, with a depth and space that I don't think can be gotten any other

way. It isn't easy to do, but when it works, the results can still surprise me.

(Zelinsky, Artist 90)

The purpose of citing the lengthy quote is to show the dedication, time, research, and skill that Zelinsky put into this book. These pictures are truly extraordinary!

Genre: classics, fairy tales, fantasy

Subject: princess, Italian Renaissance, magic, prince, art history

Age: 5+

1999. *Snowflake Bentley*. Illustrated by Mary Azarian, written by Jacqueline Briggs Martin.

Mary Azarian, the illustrator for *Snowflake Bentley*, dedicates her work in this book thus: "For all this snow lovers of the world, who—like me—think that snow is like chocolate; there is never enough" (*Snowflake Bentley*).

*Snowflake Bentley* is in the distinct category of Caldecott books that have generated much acclaim. It is a true story of a self-taught scientist who photographed thousands of individual snowflakes to study each one's unique formation. Wilson "Snowflake" Bentley (1865-1931) lived in Vermont, right in the snowbelt ("snowbelt" describes regions near the great lakes in North America with heavy snowfall in the form of lake-effect snow) where the annual snowfall is about 120 inches. He had a fertile place to explore his passion. His exploration started when his mother gave him an old microscope; he used it to look at grass and flowers, but he preferred to look at snow. He assumed at first each snowflake would look like the next, but to his surprise each intricate pattern was more beautiful than the prior. Based on his observations, "Starting at age 15

he drew 100 snow crystals each winter for three years” (Briggs Martin). His parents bought him a camera with its own microscope when he was sixteen, and so the story goes. After months and many failed attempts, at nineteen years old Bentley had successfully photographed a snowflake. “The best snowstorm of his life occurred on Valentine’s Day in 1928. He made over 100 photographs during the two-day storm. He called the storm a gift from King Winter” (Briggs-Martin). “When he was sixty-six years old Willie’s book-his gift to the world-was published” (Briggs Martin).

Throughout his lifetime, Bentley photographed thousands of individual snowflakes over four decades. He perfected “photomicrography” (photographing very small objects, especially snowflakes). His work provides scientific records of snow crystals. Five hundred of his snowflake photos are in the Smithsonian Institution Archives, to protect against all possibility of loss and destruction, through fire or accident. Bentley attempted to have the Smithsonian publish a lecture from a Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences in 1905. It never was. He also published sixty articles in various scientific and popular journals, with most focusing on snow crystals and some dealing with frost, dew, and other atmospheric phenomena. He received numerous awards.

Bentley did for snowflakes what Georgia O’Keeffe did for flowers. Bentley’s passion was a labor of love. As Bentley said,

The average daily farmer gets up at dawn because he has to go to work in the cow yard. I get up at dawn, too. But it is because I want to find some leaf, hang with dew; or a spider web, which the dew has made into the most delicate ropes of pearls... I take my camera with me, get down on my knees in the wet grass,

and photograph these exquisite bits of nature. Because I do this I can show these lovely things to people who would never have seen them without my help. But I think I am giving them something which is just as important. (Briggs Martin)

His sentiment is similar to Georgia O’Keeffe’s, in that she, too, wanted people to see her flowers up close—to really see them, just like Bentley saw snowflakes.

In the layout of *Snowflake Bentley*, black frames contain each illustration in the book. A sidebar flanks one or both sides of almost every spread; it is blue-greyish, showing snowflakes often with text, giving pertinent information about Bentley’s life to extend the main body of the text. This was a novel design at the time of the book’s publication. Azarian’s notable skills as a woodblock printer are shown as she made the snowflakes in the sidebar by carving the images into the block rather than removing the blackground; then she printed the block and pale blue-gray ink. One side bar design is repeated throughout the book (Hammond and Nordstrom 186).

The penultimate page of the book’s two-page spread shows Bentley to the far right side of the right page walking away in a snowstorm. He is seen from the back with his hat, scarf, coat, mittens and boots. The text reads:

Less than a month after  
Turning the first page of his book,  
Willy walked 6 miles home in a blizzard  
To make more pictures.  
He became ill with pneumonia after that walk  
And died two weeks later. (Briggs-Martin)  
After reading *Snowflake Bentley*, one will forever think about snowflakes

differently. This story is also about a man finding his own purpose and living each day with focus and passion. The book's illustrations contribute to its meaning, showing minute attention to detail and artistry, just as Bentley's life's work was characterized by his appreciation of the minute details of snow. Other companion books to further explore are *W.A. Bentley Snow Crystals* (1962) and *Snowflakes in Photographs* (2000).

Genre: biography, narrative nonfiction, informational text

Subject: Wilson Bentley, nature, photomicrography, photography, photographers, cameras, scientist, self-taught scientist, snow, crystals, science, Vermont, winter.

Media: woodcuts, hand tinted with watercolors

Age: 5+

### **Caldecott Books—2000s**

Innovative art techniques, retelling of classic fairy tales by current standards, historical treatment of the presidents, wordless references to 9/11, and layout provided for movie-like viewing marked the Caldecott books of this decade. In this new decade, century, and millennium, the way that readers—from children through senior citizens—approach media experienced a seismic shift. Therefore, the revisiting of old stories in new ways and continued experiments with the relationship between form and content were most appropriate for this decade's Caldecott books.

2000. *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*. Written and illustrated by Simms Taback.

Simms Taback also wrote the famous book that was runner up in 1998 for *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*. That book precedes Taback's 2000 Caldecott



Award Winner: *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*. This book starts by showing Joseph, a 40-something Jewish farmer, wearing an old overcoat that has holes in it. Right from the start this book showcases the uniqueness of the illustrations: the dust jacket contains the die-cuts in Joseph's overcoat, showing navy from the book cover below. The book ends with the lyrics to "*I Had a Little Overcoat*" interfacing with a drawing of himself, Simms Taback, and notes:

Dear Reader, As a child I had my favorite song- a Yiddish folk song called "I Had a Little Overcoat." Many years ago, I adapted the song to make a book and I called it *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*. Some people noticed that Joseph looked a lot like me.

Now you know that no artist is ever satisfied with his work, but usually we don't get to do it over. So I am particularly happy to be publishing this newly illustrated version of Joseph. I hope that all you who wrote to me about the early version will take this one to your hearts. That would prove that "you can always make something out of nothing... over and over again! Simms Taback (*Joseph Had A Little Overcoat* 39)

The text is repetitive and predictable for a young child to follow along with, but by no means boring. Joseph's coat gets worn and so he makes a jacket out of it, the jacket gets worn and so he makes a vest, then a scarf, then a necktie, then a handkerchief, and a button. Something unexpected happens; he loses the button. Is the story over? No, Joseph writes a book about it all. Moral: You can always make something out of nothing. The uniqueness of this book lies in his signature style of die-cuts. Some of the pages have an actual hole in the picture of clothing. This hole reveals a peek into the next progression of

its new use. When the page is turned, the new article of clothing is presented. Children will find the familiar repetitive text fun and interactive, coupled with the tactile aspect of inserting their finger through the holes. Children love to search pictures for details, and the interactive, tactile components of this book take it to a different level. As children read through *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*, they become more involved with the book's details, anticipating what they may see next and trying to read the text on the newspapers that are posted on the walls, on his pictures, or on the floor. This book also becomes like a game to them, hunting for small details that are often funny as well. Joseph does not speak in the book; it is told by narration.

In analyzing the book's artwork, Hammond and Nordstrom note Taback's techniques and how his cultural background influenced his artistic choices:

The illustrations almost fill the double-page spreads. The edges of the artwork fade into black borders with space after top to accommodate the hand written text. Collage materials include images cut from seed and clothing catalogs, magazines clippings, reproductions of old Jewish postcards, and photographs. Simms Taback sets the story in a fictional Polish *shtetl*, a small village where Jews lived in Eastern Europe, "a world I heard so much about as a child, filled with memories of my family and of a thriving culture that no longer exists." (Hammond and Nordstrom 85)

The pictures that Taback chose are surely dear to his heart, as they represent his culture and heritage. Some are miniature size, superimposed on paintings; others are small items that children will most likely feel compelled to try to see, thus creating another interactive element. The book includes cultural references that both adults and

children will appreciate. Hammond and Nordstrom explain the detail of Taback's work:

On the wall, references to Yiddish culture abound, including Maurice Schwartz, the first actor to play Tevye in the play *Fiddler on the Roof*; a Yiddish adage appropriate to the story; Molly Picon, the star of the Yiddish musical stage; a book by folk writer Sholem Aleichem; and the menorah. The artist features some family history as well. On the retro, the woman in the babushka is one of Taback's daughters; the ship's name is from the one on which Taback's mother sailed to the United States; and the surname on the envelope is the Polish spelling of his grandfather's name. (86)

Wider cultural references and personal family history references fill this book, which is especially appropriate since Taback identifies with the character of Joseph. The folk art style, conveyed through watercolor, gouache, pencil, ink, and collage, makes the book approachable for young children.

Taback's thoroughly thought out die-cuts are perfectly fitted to this folk song where something old is constantly transformed into something new. This technique meets the Caldecott criterion of "excellence of execution in the artistic technique employed." The *shtetl* setting and visual references to the Yiddish culture demonstrate "excellence of pictorial interpretation of story, theme, or concept." The colorful, cluttered mixed-media illustrations in folk-art style keep the reader engaged, showing "excellence of presentation in recognition of a child audience" (Hammond and Nordstrom 86).

Genre: juvenile, fiction

Subject: Yiddish culture, clothes, textiles, patterns, decorative, dress, being resourceful, recycling old into new, you could always make something out of nothing.

Age: 4+

2001. *So You Want to Be President*. Illustrated by David Small, written by Judith St. George.

*So You Want to Be President* starts with a picture of Mount Rushmore in a caricature style. It explores the presidents with interesting facts beyond the “facts.” A child will be entertained while learning about them in this manner, coupled with the hilarious caricature-illustrations. They will soon learn that presidents come in every variety: They’ve been generals like George Washington and actors like Ronald Reagan, tall like Abe Lincoln (6ft 4in), small like James Madison (5ft. 4in, 100 lbs.), big like William Howard Taft (the children will love the image of him being lowered by pulley into his custom-made tub in the White House), and handsome like Franklin Pierce. Anecdotal stories page after page keep the reader wanting more, from the embarrassment of skinny-dipping John Quincy Adams to the mischievous adventure of Theodore Roosevelt’s pony. More private facts continue throughout: James Monroe loved to decorate the White House very expensively; sections are devoted to who played a musical instrument, who danced well, who were sportsman, the ages of the presidents, and who had pets in the White House. Herbert Hoover had dogs, one named Taff: “Taff must have been a democrat, he and his republican master never got along” (St. George). (This one may be meant for the parents who may be reading this with their children.) This book shows the foibles, quirks, and the humanity of the forty-one men who by the time of the publication of this book had risen to one of the most powerful positions in the world.

Besides the levity, it details their different backgrounds (not one person of color at that time), religions, former job positions, former military positions, who was college educated (nine presidents were not), notable accomplishments, impeachments, resignations, and who became president by default. Packed with history, this book exemplifies a fun way to learn important parts of American history: Abraham Lincoln reuniting the country by winning the Civil War, Thomas Jefferson writing The Declaration of Independence, and John Kennedy sending the Peace Corps around the globe to help others (depicted in a hippie-like bus with a peace sign on it).

This book is a must-read for parents and teachers alike—not to mention, for children! It exemplifies a fun way to learn. This would be a perfect book to read on Presidents’ Day. First published in 2000 the 2012 revised edition is current through Barack Obama, our first president of color.

The humorous multi-fold illustrations serve to take hold of a child’s attention. For example, the illustrations colorfully depict the time someone was mad at William Taft and threw a cabbage at his head. Taft replied, “I see that one of my adversaries has lost his head” (St. George). Richard Nixon is shown happily in victory as he made a strike while bowling at the White House Lanes (there is also a swimming pool and a movie theater), and Ronald Reagan is shown watching one of his movies.

The caricatures are rendered in a mix of watercolor, pastel chalk, and ink.

Genre: Nonfiction, Biography

Subject: presidents, White House, United States, past presidents

Age: 6+

2002. *The Three Pigs*. Written and illustrated by David Wiesner.

“Once upon a time three pigs built three houses, Along came a wolf, who huffed and puffed . . .” (Wiesner, *The Three Pigs*). Wiesner’s version of this classic tale *The Three Pigs* is quite different from others in the past. The Three Pigs move from realistic, to surrealist, to storybook illustrations. Wiesner’s books are all innovative and sure to entertain the reader—young and old alike.

Wiesner admires the concept of creating a picture that breaks beyond its pages. He was inspired by a Bugs Bunny cartoon that he saw as a child. In it,

“Elmer Fudd is chasing Bugs Bunny for the hundredth time when suddenly Bugs and Elmer run right out of the frame of the film. Then sprockets at the edge of the filmstrip are shown as other frames are running by then they return and repeat the running scene. They look around for a moment, and then run back into the frame of film and the chase continues.” (Wiesner, qtd. in Giorgis and Johnson 402)

This format is what Wiesner translates into book form in *The Three Pigs*.

*The Three Pigs* would fall into the category of a fractured fairy tale; “Somewhere between true folktales and literary folktales for fractured fairy tales, playful variants on familiar stories and characters” (Horning, *From Cover to Cover* 66). Julie Cummins, a children’s book author, defines *The Three Pigs* as ““A classic folk or fairy tale rewritten with tongue-in-cheek humor or as a spoof using twists and spins on the story’s features; text and visual references poke fun at the original, resulting in a witty, clever, and entertaining tale”” (qtd. in Horning, *From Cover to Cover* 66).

Wiesner’s *The Three Pigs* is in a class of its own in terms of innovativeness in the use of perspective, the juxtaposition of placement of elements, and the non-typical way

he uses the border. This fractured fairy tale's pictures are delineated by fragmented pictures within; each frame leads to the next adventure. For example, the wolf is seen huffing and puffing but doesn't blow the house down; instead, he blows the pigs right out of the story, literally into another. Outside the tale, they become realistic, three-dimensional pigs that look right at the reader before they wander through other traditional tales. He combines fragments of different fairy tales in one story—or is it one story? Wiesner brilliantly changes the pigs to take on the characteristics of the various art styles represented in the other tales they visit (Horning, *From Cover to Cover* 67).

Wiesner uses illustrations to retell this well-known story of *The Three Pigs* in a completely different way. It seems plausible that if a teacher told her students that she was going to read *The Three Pigs* (old version), she would hear sighs echoing in the room, but not with this one, as Wiesner made it current; he reinvented the age-old story. Horning explains Wiesner's inventiveness, making something old truly new again:

Wiesner's playful deconstruction takes a classic story and leaves it away from the confines of its own narrative, making the reworking of *The Three Pigs* a fresh and enjoyable read for young children. Adults will also appreciate the change from the version they heard in their own childhoods. As the plot takes off in unexpected directions, children will become aware of the myriad possibilities, within a story and will be exposed to an element of freedom that cannot be found in many other books. (Horning, *From Cover to Cover* 368)

A book such as this expands a child's concept beyond the norm of other more typical children's books.

Wiesner uses design in another innovative way: he uses the font of the text

beyond its original purpose. “The typeface is an intricate part of the artwork. The text of each book has a different font that reflects the nature of the story. Moreover, Wiesner distorts, crumbles, and scatters the text” (Wiesner, “Caldecott Medal Acceptance”) as the original tale literally falls apart. The characters even write their own happy ending with the letters they shake loose from the page. In discussing the technique of this book, Hammond and Nordstrom cite the analysis of Bette P. Goldstone and Linda D. Labbo in their *Language Arts* article “The Postmodern Picture Book: A New Subgenre”: “The Three Pigs embraces motifs that define it as a postmodern picture book, a non-linear presentation, ‘having multiple story lines running concurrently... an unusual degree of playfulness, bordering on the absurd... irony... both in tone and contradictory storylines; [and a self-referential treatment,] exposing the artistic act of the book’s creation’” (206).

This fractured story is a new take on the old version of *The Three Pigs*. Wiesner brings new life to it, keeping it relevant and current with the visuals of the new millennium. He plays with the setting, the characters, and the points of view as every page unfolds with new excitement in the plot. As Horning reiterates, “For fractured fairy tales to be completely successful with children, they must begin with traditional tales that children know well. Otherwise, the humor will probably fall flat. Happily, authors have a wealth of traditional tales from which to choose” (Horning, *From Cover to Cover* 67). Wiesner is successful in choosing and adapting a tale, using storytelling and illustration to bring the three pigs into the new century in style.

Genre: Folktale, fiction, children’s literature, picture book, comedy, action and adventure.

Subject: pigs, nursery rhymes, cat and the fiddle, fantasy

Age: 5+



2003. *My Friend Rabbit*. Written and illustrated by Eric Rohmann.

A mouse narrates this almost wordless picture book about his best friend, Rabbit. The story begins when Mouse shares his brand-new paper airplane with Rabbit. He shares it knowing that Rabbit has a way of always getting into trouble. Sure enough, his paper airplane gets stuck in a tree. Rabbit devises a plan for all of his animal friends to form a ladder to retrieve it. The unique feature about this book is that Rohmann drew the picture of the animal-ladder so that the book must be tilted to view them vertically.

In an interview Rohmann was asked:

*My Friend Rabbit* has been described as having a “living ladder” at the climax of the narrative, and a view that requires the reader to tilt the book. Why did you choose to use this technique? [Eric Rohmann explains:] “I tried the tower of animals; (an elephant, a rhinoceros, a hippo and various other animals) on the normal two-page layout and it simply looked too short and squeezed. Then I tried tipping the tower—angled from lower left corner to upper right. That worked better and it eventually sparked the idea to turn the book vertically. What I hadn’t expected until I saw the book turned was the way the story slows, makes the reader look more closely—it makes you physically change the position of the book. All this, I hope, get the readers more involved. At one time in the making, I had the idea to make the reader turn the book all the way around, but that was too much. Once you’ve involved the reader in your story you don’t want to make something so clever that they leave the story to say, ‘Look how clever the author is!’” (“Rohmann, Eric”)

When Rohmann is questioned about his style, he responds by saying: “A book is more

than just a container that holds text and images. The book form—its shape, its materials, its heft, its binding—all influence the overall effect of the book” (“Rohmann, Eric”). The notion of the book’s shape was explored in 1910; a book called *The Slant Book* by Peter Newell in that year is rhomboid in shape.

In 2014, The National Center for Children’s Literature (NCCIL) exhibited “My Friend Eric Rohmann,” featuring original art from the Caldecott Award book. The exhibition included sixty-seven illustrations done in media including watercolor and relief print. It also featured artwork from Rohmann’s first book, *Time Flies* (1994) to the most recent, *Oh, No!* (2012).

Rohmann creates distinct black lines in the illustrations with hand-colored (with watercolors) relief prints of images carved from a linoleum-like material. The black lines help define the animals for the young children and the black borders surround the pages. On some pages the frames don’t contain the animals: for example, the elephant is shown leaving the black border. The black borders resemble film frames. This style of the drawings is cartoon. Carving by hand is central to this book, as even the title and author’s name on the cover and title page are hand carved.

The text repeats “trouble follows” three times in the story, which gives children a place to be interactive with the story. When the illustration shows impending trouble, the children will chime in with “trouble follows.” This is particularly salient, as there are not many words in this story.

*My Friend Rabbit* was adapted into an animated television series in 2007.

A segment from Eric Rohmann’s Caldecott acceptance speech follows:

On this cold, dark January day I awaken slowly, my limbs bending like stale

twizzlers. Through the cobwebs of early morning, I hear a voice on the other end of the line—a voice way too enthusiastic for six thirty a.m. The voice says, “This is Pat Scales of the American Library Association.” My first thought is that I have overdue books. And then I think I hear, “Your book, *My Friend Rabbit*, is the recipient of the 2003 Caldecott Medal.” Silence. If this were a movie, you’d hear a ticking clock, raindrops on the windowsill, a heart beating. I say, “You mean an Honor award?” “No, the medal.” “The silver?” “No, the gold.” I am *arguing* with Pat, trying to convince her that this can’t be, but she’s resolute and I fumble for some articulate response, a meaningful reply, some eloquent equal to the moment, but I got nothing. Silence. More ticking clocks, My heart beating. (Rohmann, *In the Words* 57)

Unassuming, as he had created this book for the love of it and by experimenting with layout and media, Rohmann received a wonderful surprise. The joy he experienced when the news sank in is certainly matched by the hundreds of thousands of children who have read his books.

Genre: Juvenile fiction

Subject: friendship, loyalty, problem solving, toys, sharing

Age: 3+

2004. *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*. Written and illustrated by Mordicai Gerstein.

This picture book captures the French acrobat Philippe Petit’s tightrope act between the Twin Towers of The World Trade Center in August 1974. It is written as a

tribute to Petit and the World Trade Towers. Philippe was a street performer and tightrope performer. He devised a plan to do it secretly. While dressing as a construction worker, he and his helpers sneaked into the World Trade Center to prepare for the real performance. That morning, as the rising sun lit the towers, he walked on his 5/8 of an inch steel cable. For almost one hour Petit walked, performed and danced (in spite of policemen waiting on each end of the rope with handcuffs to arrest him (the judge sentenced him to perform in the park for the children in the city)). Gerstein's art is realistic and cartoon style. The media consist of pen and ink, colored pencil, and oil paint on heavy paper.

Hammond and Nordstrom remark on Gerstein's use of perspective, mastery of line, excellent pictorial interpretation of the story, and use of a series of vignettes (similar to a graphic novel) providing effective pacing: "Stunning gatefolds and unusual perspectives heighten the suspense of the story for a child audience" (Hammond and Nordstrom 130).

In his Caldecott speech, Gerstein said, "Books can take us to places we will never go and let us be people and creatures we can never be. I didn't want to just tell the story of the walk - I wanted the book to be the walk between cardboard covers. I think of a picture book as a hand-held theater, entered by opening it and operated by turning its pages, no batteries, you don't have to plug it in" (Gerstein, *In the Words* 78). This envisioning of the story being analogous to the tightrope walk itself is groundbreaking, and it shows artistry on many levels. In fact, it invites the children, who figuratively and imaginatively join Petit in his tightrope walk, to be artists in their journey between the towers.

Gerstein recounts how this story came to be. He recalls that in the days following September 11, 2001, “little by little, however, the ‘horror of what had happened came over me.’ As it did, Gerstein found himself recalling another extraordinary event involving the Twin Towers from nearly 30 years before. He had even saved a magazine article about it” (Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 47). In the face of the tragedy of 9/11, Gerstein was able to use an event from nearly thirty years prior to celebrate the vitality and beauty of the towers and of those whose lives were lost on that day.

Gerstein wanted to make the book be the walk to let readers experience for themselves what it had been like for Petit when he was walking his tightrope between the towers. The illustrations clearly render this; for example, one image shows the perspective of Petit extending one foot onto the line. The vantage viewpoint puts the viewer right up there with him (this is also seen in Chris Van Allsburg’s *The Polar Express*’ illustrations of Santa in the air). Gerstein relied on the photographs reproduced in Petit’s own book about the walk, *To Reach the Clouds*. Gerstein’s drawings stretched his subjects from different angles and distances. As his work advanced Gerstein tried to contact Philippe Petit. Petit telephoned back but did not offer much. Gerstein felt that this was because he was concerned about how someone else might tell the story. Gerstein decided to render it as accurately as he could. After the fact he sent Petit a finished copy of his book. Months later, Gerstein received “‘the most beautiful, handwritten letter from Philippe telling me how much he loved my book. It was my favorite review!’” (qtd. in Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration* 51).

Gerstein’s book commemorated the tragedy of 9/11. Due to the catastrophic, sensitive subject, many children’s book authors and illustrators surely have found writing

and presenting images for children on a subject this devastating very challenging.

Gerstein found the perfect balance. If he presented more focus on the destruction and loss of 2,700 lives coupled with calamitous images of the airplanes, the book would not have been appropriate for children. Gerstein's adaptation presents a positive story for a child to associate with The Twin Towers instead of only the horrific one of 9/11.

In 2005 the book was adapted into an animated short film by Michael Sporn for Weston Woods Studios and received the Audience Choice Award for best short at the Heartland Film Festival. In 2006 the film received the Ottawa International Animation Festival award for the Best Short Animation Made for children. In December 2008 the book was adapted as a two-act ballet at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey.

Genre: Non-fiction, biography, historical

Subject: Philippe Petit; New York's World Trade Center Towers; 9/11; terrorist; tightrope walking; performing; French

Age: 4+

2005. *Kitten's First Full Moon*. Written and illustrated by Kevin Henkes.

An endearing, wide-eyed kitten sees the moon for the first time and mistakes it for a bowl of milk. The kitten chases after reflections of the moon, such as the reflection in water, and gets very wet. *Kitten's First Full Moon* is a circle story. Kitten's journey starts out as she is leaving home in pursuit of milk, and after many mishaps the kitten goes back home to find a big bowl of milk waiting for her.

Both the Kitten and Max (from Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*) are characters who go on an adventure and upon returning home find their suppers waiting

(thus a circle story). Both stories also involve an adventure and the moon. A child's home symbolizes safety and security, which is reassuring to a young child.

The images of the kitten depicted are sure to prompt some children to ask their parents for one when finishing this book. The kitten's innocence and helplessness are reinforced in the text, "Poor kitten." This helps the child to sympathize with the kitten, and a connection is established.

The start and ending of the book are decoratively embellished with designs that visually lead the child into the body of the book. They serve as a precursor to the story and for aesthetics; Henkes' choice of black and white as his main colors create a sense of unity and simplicity for a young child. Henkes also references this in part of his Caldecott acceptance speech:

He said he loved color, but he pictured this book in black and white from the start.

"I thought by keeping everything as simple and spare as possible, a better, tighter, more complete book would result. I liked the idea of having a white moon, a white cat, and a white bowl of milk surrounded by the black night." (Hammond and Nordstrom 101)

This book is different, as it is a contrast to the brightly colored children's books. Henkes felt that the various values of black and white give depth as shown with the charcoal gray shadows on Kitten. Henke's velvety look is achieved by using colored pencil. He used black and gray colored pencil and black gouache for the line. The book was printed in four colors on a full-color press. Henkes said, "This gave the illustrations a richness and depth that it wouldn't have had if the book had been printed with black ink only" ("Caldecott Medal Acceptance" 401). *Kitten's First Full Moon* is visually soft to a

child's eye with the many curved lines, the moon, the flowers, Kitten's round eyes and the round bowl of milk. Conversely, angular and geometric shapes in an illustration are usually harsher in look. For contrast, view *Once a Mouse*.

Henkes' first inspiration for this book was a circle. Hammond and Nordstrom explain how organic his process was:

After Henkes became a parent, he tried to write a simple concept book. One was all about circles and a line he wrote for it read, "The cat thought the moon was a bowl of milk." Though the concept book never developed successfully, he did like that sentence. Several years later it became the basis for *Kitten's First Full Moon*, which contains an incredible number of circular shapes. (Hammond and Nordstrom 103)

This book comes in hardcover, paperback and board book style. The sturdiness of a board book is just right for little hands to hold. A board book is a book printed on thick paperboard. Board books allow a young child the flexibility to hold the book. In an Amazon online review, one woman inadvertently sums up the value of board books. She said that her daughter fell in love with it and wanted to hold it while she read it to her. They were afraid she would rip the pages, so they bought the board book version that she held comfortably; in another review a woman credited the book with helping wean her daughter from the bottle. She said that her daughter wanted to drink her milk from a bowl like kitten did, so they put it in a large, tall bowl (a cup). The Caldecott books in numerous ways influence children of all ages ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)).

*Kitten's First Full Moon's* other awards include *The New York Times* Best Illustrated Book and winner of the Charlotte Zolotow Award.



Genre: Juvenile fiction

Subject: kitten, milk, full moon

Age: 2+

2006. *The Hello, Goodbye Window*. Illustrated by Chris Raschka, written by Norton Juster.

This story is about a young girl's joyous overnight visit to her Nanna and Poppy's house. Much exchange takes place through the ordinary kitchen window. It is symbolic as a doorway to her world with her grandparents. Everything happens near it, through it, or beyond it. For example: she greets her Nanna and Poppy "hello" through the window; she was once given a bath in the kitchen sink below the window; they say goodnight to the stars and the moon through the window; the little girl waits for her parents the next day by the window; she waves goodbye to her grandparents through the window. This story and *Kitten's First Full Moon* are circle stories.

Chris Raschka's style is unique in color, use of texture, and abstractness. The abstract watercolors and oil pastel depict splotches (picture an object that was painted with watercolor, then accidentally water spills on it: that object will bleed out—it will still be recognizable but will be abstracted) and squiggles that create detailed scenes and expressive faces. The use of broad strokes and swirls of the paint reflect florals. Florals, happy faces, and again the moon image are ones to which a young child can relate. The humans have large heads and hands that are disproportionate to the shapes of their bodies and limbs. Some of the aspects are defined by minimal pencil lines and scratches in pastels, all of which help sharpen and define some of the illustrations. Raschka's abstract

illustrations will most definitely appeal to a young child, as they resemble primary drawings. The illustrations and story present joy, comfort, and security. The house is even outlined in turquoise, a bright cheerful color. Some depictions show the reader what is happening inside the kitchen window from the outside looking in. By looking through this window, a child sees Nanna and the girl doing various happy things. Everything takes place with the window as a focal point. The art reflects the first-person voice of the little girl. The uniqueness in this family is that they are multiracial.

Marcus explains how Raschka was inspired to create the illustrations for this book:

At the beginning of the project, Raschka saw an exhibition featuring the work of the twentieth-century painter Philip Guston, huge, abstract expressionist paintings with thickly applied paint. They remind me of the kids' art I was looking at just then. I thought, this *girl* is supposed to be about six. I would like to embody some of the qualities of the kids' drawings and Guston's paintings in the illustrations.

(*Show Me* 190)

Raschka also received a 1994 Caldecott Honor for *Yo! Yes!*. He has been described by Richard Jackson (author of other collaborations with Raschka) as “unassuming that way. . . . To understand something personally is his pleasure; to make art of the understanding is his work. The selling of either is never his goal” (*In the Words* 125).

Genre: fiction, picture

Subject: Little girl, grandparents' house, kitchen window, close relationships

Age: 2+

2007. *Flotsam*. Written and illustrated by David Wiesner.

There is a reason why Wiesner is a three-time Caldecott winner: his illustrations and concepts are so innovative, and each book is superb and completely unique on its own. *Flotsam*, like most of Wiesner's books, is a wordless book, and the picture unfolds to tell the story of life on shore and of the magical, dreamlike world that lies under the sea. It starts out with a boy and his family on the beach. He loves to explore, so he brings his microscope, binoculars, and magnifier. When a large wave hits him, he notices that an old-fashioned underwater camera has washed up. After getting the film developed, the amazing images that appear before him are more than any explorer could dream of: strange ocean life, mechanical fish, sea-life sitting on chairs underwater, a sea-shell city, an alien family, giant starfish mountains, and more. Finally, he sees pictures of children from far away (pictures depicting other cultures) who found the camera before he did; they noted it with a snapshot of themselves. The boy does the same himself, inserting himself into the story. He then throws the camera back into the ocean so it can start a new journey. All in all, he has a very good day at the beach, and the camera continues on to record strange and wonderful things, allowing the cycle to continue. The watercolor illustrations consist of comic-book-style panels and full-page spreads depicting this fanciful story.

Wiesner's uniqueness is seen in his unconventional layout style. He uses a variety of framing devices and shifts the viewing angles, thus directing the reader to a precise vantage point. The reader will experience with the boy the fantastical images in the photographs. The lack of words does not detract from the book in any way; in fact, it gives free reign to the imagination. This book should be on every teacher and parent's

summer list. Most children await the summer and beach; therefore, this book also serves as a prelude to it. It is sure to continue to be displayed in bookstores seasonally. “Wiesner still vacations at the New Jersey shore, which so inspired him for this book” (Eccleshare 391).

The author/illustrator has thus far won three Caldecott Medals: for *Tuesday* (1992), *The Three Pigs* (2002), and *Flotsam* (2007). He also won Caldecott Honors for *Free Fall* (1989) and *Sector 7* (2000). I suspect this list will grow in time.

Genre: Wordless picture book

Subject: Young boy, flotsam objects, camera, exploration, fantasy

Age: 4+

2008. *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*. Written and illustrated by Brian Selznick.

Selznick’s *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* is an anomaly, in that it truly stands apart from any other Caldecott book. For starters, it has a total of 550 pages, with 284 pictures. Selznick has said that this book is a combination of the following: novel, picture book, graphic novel, flip-book, and movie. The second page in the book describes: “A novel in words and pictures by Brian Selznick.” He has produced a new kind of Caldecott Award-winning book, which shows that the Caldecott Committee is open to embracing change and growth. Selznick said, “‘What if I took parts of the text out and replace them with images so that the book itself was filled with sequences of a silent movie?’” (qtd. in Corbett). It is clear that this is his artistic method in *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*. In fact, Selznick has family-related motivations for working in film in some way. Classic movies *Gone With the Wind* and *King Kong* were produced by David O. Selznick,

Brian's grandfather's cousin. Selznick has expressed that he felt such pride at the cinema seeing his surname up on the screen: "'Seeing that name always made me feel connected to the world'" (Selznick, qtd. in Carey).

This book is a work of historical fiction, which means that even though it's made up, it is based on a real time (the turn of the twentieth century) and place (Paris) in history. It also shows a real historical figure (George Melies) and is based on fact. The fictional character is Hugo Cabret. Paris in the early twentieth century was the epicenter of technology and film, and George Melies was a pioneer of filmmaking at this time. Melies was an illusionist and film director in the early days of cinema. His films include *A Trip to the Moon* (1902) and *The Impossible Voyage* (1904).

One of the features of this book which makes *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* unique is the fact that it starts out with 42 pages of back-to-back black and white illustrations. Each illustration gets slightly larger in size than that on the prior page. The images are not complementary; they are essential. There is no text on these individual full double-spread illustrations or on other pages within the 42 illustrations. In fact, Selznick does not put any text on the same page as an illustration. Without the inclusion of these 42 illustration-containing pages, the story would not exist. The illustrations are not interdependent with the text. There is a cinematic look to this story; it is as if one is watching an old black and white film. There are close-up illustrations of all the main characters, close enough to see details on their faces—particularly in their eyes. A significant theme throughout the book is that everyone is being watched. This is significant to the setting of the book, as Selznick describes:

"Anyway, I just started thinking about all these things. I mean, it's a book movie.

A movie is a visual experience. And it's set in a time [1931] when sound was being introduced into film and being used in experimental ways. The whole book is filled with references to the innovators in French cinema." (qtd. in Corbett).

Many of the black and white illustrations are created using black and white pencil with cross hatching drawings.

Although this story is about Hugo Cabret, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* in its essence is about the early cinema inspired by the life and work of George Melies. The story takes place in Paris in 1931. Hugo, a 12-year-old, becomes an orphan when his father dies in a fire at the museum where he works. Hugo then lives with his uncle in a hidden room inside the walls of a Paris train station; there, he becomes his uncle's apprentice as the station's clock keeper. Then Hugo's uncle disappears, and he is left to care for himself and the clock; his survival depends on it. Life is hard, and Hugo steals to survive. He spends most of his free time restoring the broken automaton (a wind-up mechanical man) that he recovered from the ashes at the museum where his father worked. Hugo uses his father's notebook to help repair the automation, hoping the machine will carry a message from his father. Hugo steals pieces needed to repair the automaton from a toy maker in the train station. Hugo gets caught and meets George Melies, the owner. Eventually all works out, and he gets the automaton to work. The automaton then draws a scene from his father's favorite movie, *A Trip to the Moon*.

*The Invention of Hugo Cabret's* awards include 2008 Caldecott winner, National Book Award Finalist, #1 *New York Times* Bestseller, *New York Times* Best Illustrated Book, Los Angeles Times Favorite Children's Book of the Year, and *TIME* Magazine's 100 Best Children's and Young Adult Books of All Time. This story was made into a

film, *Hugo*, in 2010, produced by Brian Selznick and directed by Martin Selznick.

Genre: graphic novel, historical fiction, historical drama

Subject: filmmaker George Melies, automaton, Paris, Paris train station, clock keeper, orphan, thief

Age:9+

2009. *The House in the Night*. Illustrated by Beth Krommes; written by Susan Marie Swanson.

This picture book is about the light in a house during the night. A little girl's imagination takes flight at nighttime as she imagines herself as a bird.

This book is the perfect companion to add to a bedtime story collection for a child. The scratchboard and stippling images are soothing and poetic. The monochromatic black and white illustrations provide unity throughout the book, and the accents of yellow imply warmth. Golden-yellow watercolor is strategically placed in small sections of a white area on each page. This story is in the category of *Goodnight Moon*: repetition of sparse text, coupled with the child's familiar items shown. A child is pictured in many pages in her bedroom at home. An aerial angle shows her with all her belongings. Objects that bring comfort and security include a rocking chair, books on the bookshelf, a violin, a doll, a globe, and a dog bed. The child is depicted during the night, with a book in her lap: "Here is the key to the house, the house in the night with a book on her lap. A home filled with light" (*The House in The Night*). This story expands a child's sight vocabulary; with the repetition of words, a child will surely be pointing to them while a parent reads aloud.

In the story, Krommes depicts the rolling countryside of Pennsylvania, where she grew up. The picture of the little girl shown in the story is of herself as a child. Some of her favorite things have also been incorporated into the story: her daughter Marguerite's violin and a mobile in the bedroom made from shells collected during a family vacation at the seashore.

Cross hatching and stippling are used throughout in the folk-art style illustrations. Some of Krommes' illustrations pay homage to famous artists. For example, the geese resemble those in M. C. Escher's woodcut picture *Day and Night*, and a representation of Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night* hangs on the wall in the little girl's bedroom. Krommes said that *The House in the Night* is about art, music, books, imagination, family, home, and love. Krommes added that she hopes that this story will be comforting to a child who fears the dark (*In the Words* 185). In her Caldecott Medal acceptance speech, Krommes describes the text as "lyrical, inspiring, and so open-ended that the story would be told primarily through the pictures." As she asserts, "Having kids made me aware of the spectacular art in children's books and made me want to try my hand at it. But more important, the hours spent reading picture books to my girls were not only cozy but instructional. I saw the kind of books my daughters enjoyed and which details in a picture captured their attention" (*In the Words* 183).

Genre: fiction, circle story

Subject: House in the night sky, light, key, bed, moon, order to the universe.

Age: 2+



### Caldecott Books—2010s

Unbridled arrogance and self-entitlement, imaginary friendships and strong characters, the showing of the black experience and a brave and kind little girl helping a lost wolf are noteworthy in the 2010s Caldecott books. In this current decade of rapid change and fundamental questions about what the American experiment really means, it is not surprising that the Caldecott books represent both the worst and the best of human nature. In years to come, it will be most interesting to see what historians say about this decade and how literature—including children’s literature—both reflects and creates culture and reality today.

2010. *The Lion and the Mouse*. Written and illustrated by Jerry Pinkney.

Jerry Pinkney’s adaptation of one of Aesop’s fables highlights courage and forgiveness. When the lion catches the mouse, he does not eat her but lets her go free. Further on in the story, the mouse is shown with her baby mice, which helps the readers know that she, the mother is needed, belongs to something, and has a place in the world and would have been missed if the lion ate her. Toward the end of the story, the lion gets caught in a net by the poacher’s trap and is released by the mouse as she bites through the rope to release him.

This wordless picture book uses text only to denote the sounds of animals: as “tweet” and “grr.” Pinkney said that he is fascinated with animal sounds that he heard when living next to a nature preserve, which influenced him in using selected animal sounds in his story. “Pinkney’s researched animal anatomy by studying pictures, but to depict the animals’ feelings and movements, Pinkney said, ‘I would stand in front of a

mirror and go through a series of expressions and body movements in order to incorporate what I'd learned into my drawings" (Hammond and Nordstrom 109). The emotion-filled depictions of the animals drive the story, as they clearly convey their panicked state. One illustration contrasts the lion and the mouse when the mouse is in the lion's large footprint. This visual is salient especially to children, as it makes the point more tangible. The moral of *The Lion and the Mouse* is that a person can possess strength irrespective of size. This image of the tiny mouse within the large footprint also shows "that her diminutive size does not indicate her over-sized heart and courage. Her bravery knows no bounds" (Hammond and Nordstrom 109-10).

Pinkney combined his two great interests in this book: his fascination with Africa and his interest in animals and insects—these appear in many of his illustrations. After art school, Pinkney's first job was delivering flowers, and then later he was prompted to become floral designer. Pinkney notes: "If you look at my body of work, I'll find flowers embellishing many of my images" (Hammond and Nordstrom 111). Realism even down to the details of the flowers marks Pinkney's drawing style. Pinkney's style of drawing in this book is realistic. The media used include pencil, watercolor, and colored pencils on paper.

This wordless picture book is perfect for story-time at home and at school. It shows cause and effect, and teaches about good deeds. Without words in a book, the child has a chance to tell their version with the clues from the illustrations. In doing so, it allows the child to be heard, fosters creativity, and builds vocabulary.

The back cover of the book is Pinkney's rendition of Edward Hicks' painting *The Peaceable Kingdom* (Hammond and Nordstrom). Edward Hicks was a Quaker preacher

and artist). He did many variations of *The Peaceable Kingdom*, but they all exemplify wild animals with humans coexisting peacefully and harmoniously. This is very fitting for Pinkney's work, which holistically incorporates animals to aid young humans in their intellectual, emotional, and moral development.

Genre: fable, retelling of Aesop, fiction

Subject: lion, mouse, poachers, animals, African Serengeti of Tanzania and Kenya, jungle, empathy

Age: 1+

2011. *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*. Illustrated by Erin E. Stead, written by Philip C. Stead.

This story is about a happy man, Amos McGee. His life is routine, but he is a happy man who loves his job at the City Zoo. He is very attentive to his animal friends and always takes time to be there for them in spite of his busy schedule. The story shows acts of kindness that Amos does, such as sitting quietly with the nervous penguin to allow him to feel comfortable enough to open up and reading stories to the owl that is afraid of the dark. One day, Amos is sick and doesn't go to the zoo. His friends are very concerned and in return go to Amos' house to take care of him. The end of the story depicts them all sleeping together at Amos' house. They show him the kindness that he has shown them.

This story originated in a casual way. For three years, artist Erin Stead (illustrator) had not drawn; consequently, she lost some confidence in her artistic ability and began to miss it. One day, in a leisurely way, she drew an elephant and an old man. Without her knowing it, her husband Phil (author of *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*) took her drawings

to an editor. Her very first picture book (*A Sick Day for Amos McGee*) went on to win the celebrated Caldecott Medal. Phil and Erin dedicated the book to each other (Hammond and Nordstrom 179).

On her blog, Erin Stead humbly describes herself as a “hack printmaker at best” (*Erin Stead* 2009). Her process proceeds from sketch to carving on woodblock; next, she spreads color over the block and presses paper over it. After removing the paper, she allows the color to dry before she draws on top of it with pencil (Hammond and Nordstrom 178).

Animals are a familiar, relatable image to young children and are often depicted in children’s books. Another friendly image shown in the book is of a red balloon. The colors are muted throughout the book to match Amos’ unassuming life. The black and white of the penguin complements well the red of the balloon, while the red also lends a pop of color.

Genre: Fiction

Subject: animals, friendship, character unselfish, kindness, compassion, zoo

Age: pre 4+

2012. *A Ball for Daisy*. Written and illustrated by Chris Raschka.

Daisy, a small white dog with black ears, is a very happy dog who loves to play with her favorite red ball. She is depicted playing with it on several pages. She cannot get enough of her ball and she even sleeps with it. The red ball is more than her toy; it is her best friend. This wordless picture book conveys Daisy’s emotions through the illustrations. Daisy is so happy until another dog grabs her ball and breaks it. The

depictions poignantly express shock, concern, bewilderment, denial, anger, sorrow, despondency, and sadness. The cycle of loss is shown. The colors used help in illustrating Daisy's emotions; the watercolor washes grow darker from their previous happy yellow color. The colors further continue to take on the emotions of Daisy. They turn purple to brown, corresponding to her stages of disbelief, distress, and depression. As Daisy accepts her loss, she starts to become more open to what is around her. Her master, a little girl, is shown more in the pictures at this point. Soon, Daisy gets a new blue ball from the owner of the same dog who broke the ball originally. She is happy again; and the artist's depiction of her clearly expresses this as the happy colors return.

Irrespective of the limited use of line, only basic use of color, and no text, Raschka perfects the ability to convey the narrative completely. The two relatable images—the dog and the red ball—will surely capture a child's immediate attention and sympathy. Raschka states, “I try to paint in a manner primarily derived from the essence of the book as a whole, whatever that might mean to me. Somehow, the book itself will dictate the style” (qtd. in Danielson).

The media used are gouache, watercolor, and ink. Gouache paint is more opaque than watercolor, which is transparent. The ball is painted in red gouache and is noticeably a stronger tone than watercolors surrounding it. Thus, the color red stands out with prominence and importance, drawing the readers to it (the primary colors are red, yellow, and blue).

Raschka has also won a Caldecott Honor for *Yo! Yes?* (1994) and a Caldecott Medal for *The Hello Goodbye Window* (2006).

This story is the perfect vehicle for a child going through loss; it validates the

spectrum of emotions. In fact, Raschka stated that this happened to his son's favorite ball. A neighbor's dog, named appropriately Daisy, broke it. This story serves to help children with such complex feelings as loss and perhaps death, and it gives these very complex emotions a platform. The ball is a ball, yes—but it is symbolic of more. *A Ball for Daisy* is most fitting for a parent, teacher, therapist, or school psychologist to incorporate, as it will facilitate and validate the grieving process.

In his Caldecott Medal acceptance speech, Raschka said, “The task of a picture book illustrator, I would say, is to remember a particular emotion, heighten in, and then capture it in some painted vocabulary, so that the same emotion is evoked in the child, in the reader”(“Caldecott Medal Acceptance” 22). The Caldecott committee, as well as parents, educators, and children nationwide, agree that Raschka performs this task most successfully, year in and year out.

Genre: Fiction

Subject: dogs, ball, friendship, sharing, loss, the stages of grief

Age: 3+

2013. *This Is Not My Hat*. Written and illustrated by Jon Klassen.

A small fish steals a bowler hat from a much larger fish while he is sleeping. He narrates the story with arrogance and self-entitlement. He does not feel bad for what he did, as he wanted the hat. He says very matter-of-factly on the very first page: “This hat is not mine, I just stole it, I stole it from a big fish, he was asleep when I did it” (Klassen) A crab saw what happened but agreed not to tell. The little fish swims to a new area to live where the plants grow big and tall and he won't be seen. Then the crab tells on the

fish, the larger fish finds the small fish, and the last scene shows the large fish back home with his hat back where it belonged. Although not stated one way or another the audience presumes he has eaten the little fish.

“This hat is not mine I just stole it” (Klassen). This bold statement starts out the book. Normally young children in this age group will not be forthcoming about an indiscretion. The fact that the fish said so unaffectedly that he stole the hat is uncharacteristic of any other Caldecott’s story line. Surely this first sentence will get the audience’s immediate attention. It seems most certain that children’s eyes will widen with surprise when the fish proclaims his stealing. There is a shift in the content of themes throughout the years of the Caldecott books. They are growing more organically with the story lines and sensitive subjects are now being broached.

As Hammond and Nordstrom relate,

The book was inspired by Edgar Allan Poe’s short story “*The Tell-Tale Heart*” in which the first-person narrator tries to convince the reader he is sane while describing a murder he committed. John Klassen relates, “[their murderer] is given the whole floor, without narrative interruption, to try to make an argument for his reasonableness and sanity by telling [readers] his version of how things went down. . . . This is the same set up as in *This Is Not My Hat*.” (203)

In the picture book, however, the illustrations are essential to revealing the folly of the small fish’s deed and his unrealistic grasp of a situation (Hammond and Nordstrom 203).

Klassen’s illustrations are a combination of single-page and double-page spreads. The double spread adds to the large fish’s ominous demise and power over of the smaller fish. The illustrations of the fish among the tall plants strongly resemble cut-paper collage

and show a sense of depth within the illustration. A child will see the smaller fish hiding within the foliage, confident that he is hidden and safe. The medium used is Chinese ink, gouache, watercolor, and ink. Klassen also used digital images.

Genre: Fiction

Subject: stealing, justifying it, fish, swimming, trusting, morals, revenge, cause and affect

Age: 3+

2014. *Locomotive*. Written and illustrated by Brian Floca.

*Locomotive* explains what it was like to travel on a transcontinental railroad in the late 1860s. Detailed depictions are shown of the train traveling on the new transcontinental railroad, the train, the cab, the crew, the fireman, the engine, close up of the train wheels, and elements of the riders' journey, among other elements. In the summer of 1869 America's brand-new transcontinental railroad changed the course of travel.

Almost 150 years ago, post Civil War, the completion of the transcontinental railway dramatically changed both this country's landscape and the opportunities for its people. Prior to this there were few trains in the West and no trains that connected with Eastern lines.

The completion of the transcontinental railroad made the American West very accessible, which created a boom in trade, population, and business. Yet, with the new railroad, the vast ecosystem was disrupted and the bison were almost annihilated by the new settlers' unregulated hunting, creating disaster for the Plains Indians. The book cover and dust jacket are different in that the dust jacket focuses on the machine while the cover



shows that disruption of the ecosystem.

In children's books there are steadfast relatable images such as the moon and animals. Particularly little boys favor trains and of course, superheroes, knights and castles. Train devotees, both young and old, will appreciate this book for its factual information. The media used are watercolor, ink, acrylic, and gouache. Technical details of the steam locomotive are rendered by precise ink line. This book presents information and sparks the imagination about the transcontinental railroad, making this an ideal teaching tool for teachers to incorporate into their lessons on the subject.

Floca's favorite writing subjects are race cars (*The Racecar Alphabet*), trucks (*Five Trucks*, 1999), ships (*Lightship*, 2007), rockets (*Moonshot*, 2009), and trains (*Locomotive*, 2013). He has won many awards in addition to the Caldecott Medal, and he received four Robert F. Sibert Honor Awards for Distinguished Informational Books and a silver medal from the Society of Illustrators, and he has twice been selected for the *New York Times'* annual 10 Best Illustrated Book List.

Genre: Historical fiction

Subject: Transcontinental railroad, trains, travel, a journey, new beginnings for people seeking a new place to live, the cause and effect of progress.

Age: 8+

2015. *The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend*. Written and illustrated by Dan Santat.

Beekle lives on a rainbow-hued island with other imaginary friends who all wait their turn to be chosen by a real-child to become their imaginary friend. Time goes by

and Beekle isn't chosen, so he decides to take matters into his own hands. He travels past deep waters until he reaches the city (which looks like Manhattan) to find his believing-child. The city is crowded, and everyone seems to be rushing about; discouraged, Beekle goes to sit in a big tree and when there, he meets his believing-little girl, Alice. She, too, has longed for a connection, a friendship. Beekle and Alice go on to have many adventures.

The artwork is predominantly created digitally. Beekle's isolation and sadness are accentuated by the illustrations. He is depicted in the context of other large figures, such as the trees, and he is featured alone on the subway.

This story deals with children's innate desire for a connection of friendship. They refer to their special friend with the phrase, "so-and-so is my best friend." Initially, this best friend may take the form of an imaginary friend. As children enter pre-school and thereafter, they long for this connection. Santat zeroed in on a basic, intrinsic need of a child: a connection. Another important aspect of the book is that Beekle takes matters into his own hands, and he decides to go out and find what he needs. He does not passively wait. This act makes him a positive role model for a child.

The Caldecott Committee that year loved this book so much so that some got tattoos of various images from the book. The following is from the Committee members: "There was something in the air around the 2015 Caldecott Medal. Our committee bonded in so many ways, and getting things together was just one more piece of evidence of our amazing friendship" (Parrott). (Pictures of some of the tattoos can be seen in Parrott).

Santat's son inspired this story, and it was a gift to his son. The name Beekle

derived from his son's first effort at saying his first word, bicycle.

Genre: fiction

Subject: imaginary friend, friendships, loneliness, taking matters into your own hands

Age: 2+

2016. *Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World's Most Famous Bear*. Illustrated by Sophie Blackall and written by Lindsay Mattick.

Lindsay Mattick is the great-granddaughter of Harry Colebourn (the veterinarian in the story). This true story is narrated by Mattick. She tells the story of a remarkable friendship between a man and a bear. Their journey first started when veterinarian Harry Colebourn left Winnipeg, Canada, to join the army unit during WWI to care for soldiers' horses during the war. At a train stop in White River, he saw a baby cub with a man that was a trapper. He paid the man in exchange for the baby bear. Harry and the bear crossed the ocean to an army base in England. Winnie became the mascot of Harry's Second Canadian Infantry Brigade. All in the Brigade felt that Winnie was very special. Harry named the bear Winnie to remember Winnipeg, where he grew up. Time passed, and the soldiers and Harry were going to be shipped to France. Then Harry drove Winnie to the London Zoo. At the end of the story, the little boy who is being read to tells his mother that he doesn't want the story to end. She replies, "You have to let one story end so the next one can begin" (Mattick). This new story, which is part of the end of the original one, begins when at the zoo a little boy (named Christopher Robin) is captivated by Winnie. They develop a close bond, which inspires him to call his stuffed-bear Winnie the Pooh the most beloved bear. The final pages show pictures of Harry's actual diary,

pictures of the soldiers in the unit with the bear, and a photo showing Harry and Winnie. In 1992 a statue was unveiled in Winnipeg of Harry and Winnie, modeled after a picture belonging to Harry. Mattick fames this story for her younger son, Cole.

The illustrations are unique in that the last pages are illustrated to resemble a scrapbook full of black and white photos taken from Harry's photo album. This artistic choice highlights the historical accuracy of the book. *Winnie the Pooh* is an established character that children know and love. Therefore, they are sure to be interested in this story while learning the origins of *Winnie the Pooh*.

Genre: non-fiction

Subject: bear; Winnipeg, Canada; true story of a real-life bear that inspired Winnie the Pooh; soldiers; war; veterinarian; trapper; Harry Colebourn

Age: 7+

2017: *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel*. Written and illustrated by Javaka Steptoe.

Javaka Steptoe was drawn to Jean-Michel Basquiat's art when first seeing it at an exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum in New York. He loved the energy it exuded. He valued art and was exposed to it through both of his parents being artists. The exhibit Steptoe attended inspired this true story of Jean-Michael Basquiat. This book tells the story of an American artist born of a Haitian father and a Puerto Rican mother. Basquiat's childhood in Brooklyn is noted, and so is the development of his art style and career. When Basquiat was young, he painted from morning to night, often waking with images that he felt compelled to record. His mother, Matilde, was a very big influence on him: she

would draw with him on the floor and read poetry to him, and they would go to the museums. When he was 7 years old, a car hit him while he was playing outside. To help him recover his mother gave him a copy of *Grey's Anatomy* from which he drew the images. This book was an important influence in his work. That same year his mother had mental health issues and had to leave home. This affected Basquiat greatly and eventually the family broke up. At 17 years old he left home for lower Manhattan, N.Y., to paint and, at age 25, he was at the height of his career. He started by drawing graffiti with poems, exhibitions, and solo shows in Italy among others. He signed his art "SAMO" short for same "Same Old Shit." His art made social commentary as did the art of his good friend Andy Warhol did. In 1988, he died of a drug overdose of heroin (this part was not in the children's book but is mentioned in the afterword. The illustrations of Coretta Scott King show a similar style to that of Basquiat. Basquiat's art was painted with vibrant layers of paint and paper scraps on found wood.

This is the first of the Caldecotts to feature a story about an artist. In addition, there were not many people of color represented in the Caldecotts prior to this, especially as the main character of the book and the illustrator/author Javaka Steptoe is African American; comparatively, African American artists have been the minority in winning the Caldecott Awards. Steptoe said:

"I am thrilled that the medal went to a nonfiction book written about a person of color by a person of color. With only 10 percent of children's books containing multicultural content, and fewer featuring characters with disabilities, the gold seal on the cover of *Radiant Child* will help ensure it gets into the hands of young readers who long to see themselves reflected in books. It will also open windows

for others to see that despite differences, all people share common feelings and aspirations.” (qtd. in Isaacs)

Azure Thompson reports that “The night after Javaka won the Caldecott Medal, he told a room full of librarians in Seattle, Washington, that the award means his voice will be amplified. The Caldecott Medal will help to ensure that he continues to tell stories about the black experience and black voices would be heard and served as a platform for him to be heard.”

The Caldecott Medal Award creates the platform for these books to be immediately seen. This book also won the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award, which recognizes children’s books by African American authors and illustrators that reflect the African American experience. Immediately following these awards, *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean -Michel Basquiat* sold an additional 1,100 copies.

The book has done very well, reaching great critical acclaim; the artist on whom it is based is equally celebrated. As “Basquiat: A Quick Killing in Art” author Phoebe Hoban explains, “Like all artists whose work mirrors their worlds, Basquiat reflected his—that of a black man in twentieth-century America. Few have done it as successfully. For better or worse, Jean-Michael Basquiat has become` the world’s most famous black artist. To take off on his painting “Famous Negro Athletes,” Basquiat himself has become an icon: “Famous Negro Artist” (Hoban). Further, the legacy of Basquiat has caused his artwork to fetch very high prices at auction. For example, in 2017, his most expensive work to date sold for \$110.5 million at an auction in New York. This was, in fact, “the highest price reached by a black artist and also the highest paid by an artist from the United States” (Tindera).

The following list represents some of the awards bestowed on this book: An Indiebound Bestseller, *Essence Magazine* Top 10 Books of the Year, NAACP Image Awards Nomination for Outstanding Literary Work in Children, Bank Street College of Education 2017 Best Children's Book of The Year, NPR Best Books of 2016, *Washington Post* Best Books of 2016, New York Public Library 2016 Best Books for Kids, and Hornbook Fanfare Best Books of 2016.

Javaka Steptoe is known for his illustrations that combine collage and painting. As Shannon Maughan explains, "In *Radiant Child*, Steptoe collaged bright paint, photos, and other pieces of found materials onto pieces of wood he rescued and repurposed from discarded Brooklyn museum exhibit materials, local dumpsters, or on the street. The result is original work that interprets and is inspired by Basquiat's paintings and design" ("A Very Incredible Day"). Steptoe's illustrations are meant to imitate and enlighten Basquiat's work.

Genre: Non fiction

Subject: The art and life of Jean-Michel Basquiat, African American artist, mother's depression, African Americans

Age: 6+

2018. *Wolf in The Snow*. Written and illustrated by Matthew Cordell.

This beautiful story is a tale of a girl and a wolf pup who are both lost in a snowstorm and how each helps the other. *Wolf in The Snow* is a wordless picture book except for onomatopoeias: lick- lick, growl, howl, huff-huff, bark-bark, sniff, screech, and sink. These sight words are repeated in the story, which also teaches a young

child new vocabulary words in a relatable way. The main character is a little girl dressed in a red parka. On her way home from school, it begins to snow, with the rate of snowfall quickly increasing. The visibility is not good, and she gets lost and encounters a little wolf that was separated from his pack. She feels compassion for the wolf, for it is also struggling. This story reads like a drama: she is lost, the wolf is lost, a pack of large wolves are in the distance howling away, and she is exhausted from trudging in the snow. Despite her fear, the little girl picks up the wolf, which only adds to her struggle in the deep snow. She follows the sounds of the wolves in the distance to return the wolf to its mother while averting danger with the baby wolf in hand. After doing so, she falls in the snow and rests. The wolves gather around her (suspense builds as the reader is not sure if she is going to be harmed by them) to howl to let her parents know where she is. The parents find her, and all go home to their respective families. This little girl had a choice in choosing courage or fear and she chose the former: again, a strong female character is shown. The narrator for this book's trailer on YouTube sums up the essence of this story while the background music plays Bombs Away by Archers of Loaf: "A girl is lost. A wolf is lost. The girl must choose... courage or fear, "What do we really know about ourselves? What do we really know about each other? Only through sacrifice . . . bravery . . . compassion . . . Will we know the truth" ("Wolf in the Snow Book Trailer").

Several critics have referenced parallels to the story *Little Red Riding Hood*. The illustrations are of watercolor. The predominant colors of red, black and white all play off each other in contrast adding to the discord. The stark white landscape accentuates the red and black colors. The little girl is drawn in a cartoonish way, yet the wolves are depicted realistically; teeth and all, adding to the possible impending doom.



This story went on to win the following awards: Caldecott Medal (2018), a National Public Radio Best Book, a *Horn Book Magazine* Best Book, a *School Library Journal* Best Book, a Kirkus Review Best Book, a *Boston Globe* Best Book, and a *Huffington Post* Best Book.

Caldecott Award Committee Chair Tish Wilson said that committee members were astonished that a deceptively simple book could be such a dramatic story of survival. This book is sure to keep the readers, young and old alike, on edge until the very end. This story empowers little children, for the little girl shows much character, strength, perseverance, and courage.

Genre: fiction

Subject: snow, brave little girl, courage, compassion, kindness, bravery, wolves, wolf pup

### **Summary**

Because this dissertation is being written shortly after the selection of the 2018 Caldecott winner, the description of Caldecott books must stop here. *Wolf in the Snow* is a positive note on which to end this catalog of excellent children's literature—it reflects the best in illustration, as it uses illustration to tell a story, to highlight the best in human nature, and to inspire bravery and kindness.

As we have seen during our journey with these books, as time went on, the Caldecott books became more sophisticated and edgy. They delved into social issues and stories that were not light-hearted, in addition to engaging in cutting-edge experimentation with the visual arts. The future developments in books bearing the Caldecott seal remain to be seen. What is certain is that if future selection committees

follow the pattern of past selection committees, the books they select will reflect the culture of their day and will advance both literary and visual art for children.

## Chapter 5:

### CONCLUSION: THE CALDECOTTS' CONTRIBUTIONS—

#### A FINANCIAL AND CULTURAL LEGACY

Due to the acclaim and prestige of receiving a Caldecott Medal Award, the illustrator will know that their book will remain in libraries and stores for years to come. In addition, these books have a greater chance of being translated in other languages. This notoriety also increases the chance of the book being made into a movie. Noteworthy examples of books whose success translated into even greater film success are *Jumanji*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, *Madeline*, and *The Polar Express*. Some of these movies were elevated in obtaining box office recognition with A-list actors—for example, Robin Williams in *Jumanji* and Tom Hanks in *The Polar Express*. The acclaim received by these movies brings an increase in income and exposure. The individual box office statistics are further noted with the corresponding books.

A *New York Times* article “Publishing: Do Prizes Sell Books?” shows the importance that the Caldecott Awards have in relation to other prestigious awards:

Due to the growing number of awards, Mr. Robert Gottlieb (Knopf President and Editor in Chief) expresses that he is not sure if they have the same impact today; adding, “Few awards ever really lead to any really greater sales.” Even the celebrated, Nobel Prize will sell books in the United States if the winner is an American author. “Perhaps the most successful awards commercially are the John Newbery Medal for the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children, and The Randolph Caldecott Medal for the most distinguished American picture book for children. They both frequently turn also into huge sellers. “You

may well sell 40,000 copies of the book within the first year out, as a direct result of winning each award, and they continue to sell year in, year out,” said Neal Porter, director of library services for Charles Scribner’s Sons and Athenaeum. (McDowell)

The Caldecott Medal has such prestige that librarians, teachers, school administrators, and parents are automatically eager to buy Caldecott books once the awards are announced. When a book wins a Caldecott, the sales of the book increase substantially. Some people buy the books just because they won the award. When the public sees the Caldecott seal they purchase it without further thought (Shafer). Additionally, the Caldecotts have a multi-generational effect: yesteryear’s children, who enjoyed Caldecott books from years past, are now parents and educators—and they want to share the books that so strongly influenced them with the children in their care.

Rita Auerbach, a retired children’s librarian who was chair of the 2010 Caldecott Award committee, expressed that ““winning a Caldecott is a little like winning the Nobel Prize, in that forever afterward you are Caldecott winning illustrator. That phrase accompanies your name wherever your name appears, and that’s a quite wonderful thing”” (qtd. in Neary, “A Colorful Anniversary”). The professional and even personal life of every Caldecott winner is permanently marked by the reception of this honor. The accolades that a Caldecott book receives show that this recognition is truly the Oscar of children’s books. Being a Caldecott illustrator immediately elevates the illustrator’s status. In 1964, Maurice Sendak won the Caldecott Award for his iconic *Where the Wild Things Are*, and almost immediately it became a bedtime favorite. This overnight sensation soon became a classic, then a movie. This one book alone changed Maurice

Sendak's career and life.

Along with the honor, prestige, and importance of winning a Caldecott, the by-product is that it has a huge impact on sales—more so than most literary awards (Neary, “A Colorful Anniversary”). In fact, many go on to become classics: *Make Way for Ducklings* (1942), *Where the Wild Things Are* (1964), *Jumanji* (1982), and *The Polar Express* (1986) are prime examples of this phenomenon. Additionally, many of the Caldecotts are also translated into other languages, so they sell well in other countries, bringing in more revenue and notoriety.

Chris Van Allsburg's classics *Jumanji* and *The Polar Express* have transcended generations and have reached classic status. As the illustrator notes, “Years ago, I signed it for parents giving it to their children. And their children have subsequently become parents themselves. So now I'm signing it for, you know, that generation. So that's a terrific feeling” (qtd. in Neary, “2017 Newbery and Caldecott Medal Winners”). In 1989 *The Polar Express* was praised in *The New York Times*, in which Kim Herron stated:

*The Polar Express* is a publishing phenomenon—an established picture-book classic younger than most of the children who will pore over its pages this Christmas. Since it first appeared in 1986, it has made *The New York Times* best seller list every December. More than a million copies have been sold. Every year, Houghton Mifflin, Van Allsburg's publisher, has printed more copies each year than the previous one to keep up with the demand-550,000 for this Christmas season. (Herron)

Due to the acclaim that the Caldecott books generate, the awards generate tremendous profit margins for their authors/illustrators. Winning a Caldecott Award is an

industry in itself. One of the ALA Caldecott websites, “The Caldecott Medal 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary,” is an example of this. There is a wealth of information pertaining to the Caldecotts. The presentation of all of this information is the result of careful planning, publicity, design, sponsorships, and more. The ALA presents information and publicity for the Caldecott Awards through the ALSC’s blog, Facebook page, Red Carpet Interviews, and events. The ALA markets Caldecott merchandise and has produced Caldecott bookmarks and a special 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary logo (no longer available), created by 2008 Caldecott winner Brian Selznick. Further, the ALA sponsors Caldecott Academy – Online Opportunities and sells a Newbery and Caldecott Mock Election Tool Kit as a way to educate the public about how the awards are selected. Other information is presented through the ALA, such as TeachingBooks.net. This site offers free recordings, and over 1,500 online resources (“The Caldecott Medal 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary”)

Through Facebook, the ALSC has hosted Facebook forums and presented a six-week course, taught by Kathleen T. Horning and designed to provide librarians, teachers, and other interested adults with an in-depth understanding of the Caldecott Medal. Beyond this, the ALSC’s website includes dedicated areas that discuss Randolph Caldecott; the Caldecott Academy; the history of the award itself; the selection process; the artistic elements behind the books; and learning to identify media, style, visual elements, and the basics of composition. The long list of staff that work on the ALA internet websites specializing in multiple areas includes, but is not limited to, people working in the following roles and concentrations: blog manager, marketing, diversity in literature, and youth service manager. The Caldecott legacy is long and grows in popularity every year, in large part thanks to the outstanding publicity efforts by the

ALSC.

From the perspective of the artists, too, the Caldecotts present significant business components, mainly in the form of opportunities for career advancement. Picture book artists in the past decade have enjoyed greater recognition than ever before. For example, more art museums exhibit their work. In the United States, three museums now show nothing but picture-book art: the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Massachusetts; The National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature in Abilene, Texas; and the Mazza Museum in Findlay, Ohio. In addition, more colleges now offer courses in illustration art. This upsurge in the appreciation of the art of illustrators makes the profession more and more respected and potentially financially lucrative—for Caldecott winners and those who do not have that distinction.

Librarians and educators increasingly make use of the Caldecott books and Honor books in their work with children, boosting sales of these books. This financial benefit for the artists, writers, and publishers is not the only benefit: those involved in creating Caldecott books have the pride of knowing that their work is making a unique and long-lasting impact on the education of children throughout the nation. Many librarians showcase the Caldecott books in a separate section of the library, which elevates the status of importance of the Caldecotts. A great number of elementary schools and middle schools hold annual "Mock Caldecott" competitions during which young people vote to select the year's best picture book—after first looking at dozens of possibilities and debating the books' strong and weak points. Books foster critical thinking for a child when they see how the protagonists in the story book solve a dilemma. In addition, when children are in school discussing the book among their classmates, they will gain

perspective from hearing another student's point of view that may challenge their schema. Further, by discussing the illustrations, the students are learning about mediums and artistic styles used, coupled with some Art History. Teachers more and more are using the Caldecott books as resources when teaching. The ALSC provides complimentary lesson plans that a teacher can use to correspond with the subject of choice. In addition, there are vast resources on the Internet—for example, *The Glorious Flight* (1984) offers lessons in art, science, math, and timeline of flight. The Caldecott books are a vital resource for teachers, for they contain celebrated illustrations, the ability to evoke emotions via text and illustrations, and relatable protagonists, along with varied genres.

The Caldecott Award honors some of the best and most innovative artists in the field of children's literature. The Award serves as a guide for parents and teachers searching for quality books, and rightly so. The Award can be said to be akin to the Pulitzer Prize (discussed above) and the *The New York Times* best-selling book list, among other prestigious literary awards. People are influenced by awards and various consumer guides, including the Zagat Restaurant guides and Consumers Report. The Caldecott seal represents a book that has been thoroughly vetted for readers, educators, and consumers.

Picture books provide many opportunities to engage children. An adult can facilitate this by asking questions about the images and have the children share their ideas of what's happening in the story. Picture books create a story, since through them children see a story's sequence: beginning, middle and end. An illustration in a book may be the first contact children have with art, and with this exposure a new sensory



experience opens. In addition, most children love art; therefore, the art in picture books often gets them to read. The illustrations in picture books allows children to interact with the text. Through books, young children learn about our world with a new perspective and see how they themselves fit into the bigger whole. When children read the Caldecott books they are also exposed to social conventions. Picture books also help a child develop their language skills with the rhyme and rhythm and sight words. Picture books can also be multi-sensory when certain design elements are used.

The opportunities that picture books provide to children imply that those creating these books have a serious responsibility. While there is no formal quality control across publishing houses for picture books, the Caldecott Awards and the stringent process for their selection provides this type of quality assurance, letting Americans know each year which picture books are the best of the best—uniquely and thoroughly fulfilling the important tasks of picture books.

The pressure is on for illustrators. In the past they were not competing in such a sophisticated and high-tech market. Today's illustrators have to compete with the increasingly intriguing and technological industry. The illustrations in children's books, now more than ever, need to excel in order to compete in today's market, since children's devices, games, and toys are increasingly flashy and attention-grabbing. As a book lover, I find this trajectory very sad; yet, that being said, the Caldecott Award-winning illustrations meet this challenge. Many years ago, I took a class called Advanced Reading Techniques in which the professor addressed the problem of what to do when a child, adolescent, or young adult does not like to read. She responded by stressing that it does not matter what they choose to read, be it comics or the newspaper, but to just get them

reading. Unfortunately, this is now only partially true for a child in today's world. With a tablet in hand, they are viewing within seconds rapid-fire visual changes (much literature has been written about the quandary of effects of screen time and social media and what they do to a child's brain and sensory processing ability). To keep up with the changing competitive times, books need to be just as innovative and unique. The Caldecott Award-winning illustrations do this. For example, the illustrations in *Black and White*, *Flotsam*, *Tuesday*, *Jumanji*, and *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* come to mind.

The following sentiment from *Children's Picturebooks: The Art of Visual Storytelling* by Martin Salisbury and Morag Styles poignantly explains the benefits of children's books:

Mention has already been made about the picture book's key function as the first literature most children experience, usually in the guise of a narrative that combines words and images. Jean-Paul Sartre, the existentialist French philosopher, once said "childhood decides everything", and it is important that a wide range of challenging, inventively illustrated picture books feature strongly in children's early reading diet. The picture book is also the main vehicle through which children are introduced to art, so parents and teachers will want to ensure they are giving examples by the finest illustrators. Picture books can encourage children to think deeply. Picture books can provide a safe space in which children can explore emotional relationships, including some of the big issues of life- love, divorce, death, violence, bullying, environmental issues and so on. We need to value this extraordinary visual literature that gives so much pleasure to children, yet it makes demands on, and contributes so positively to, their cognitive,

emotional, aesthetic and intellectual development. After all, as Perry Nodelman put it in *Words about Pictures* (University of Georgia Press, 1990), good picture books “offer us what all good art offers us: greater consciousness—the opportunity... to be more human.” (86)

Books represent a unique look into the cultural landscape and values that are the norm of their day. They represent what is occurring in society and what is presented to young, impressionable children. Children are greatly influenced by what is presented visually, so those creating and selecting their books must take their responsibilities very seriously. Without doubt, the Caldecott Award-winning books stand apart from other children’s books in their celebrity status of illustrations. Coupled with stories that are noteworthy just the same, the illustrations are exceptional. Children’s stories serve many functions. Poet and Children’s Laureate Michael Rosen expressed the following about children’s books: “I think of children’s books as not so much for children, but as the filling that goes between the child world and the adult world. One way or another, all children’s books have to negotiate that space” (Eccleshare 9). And, in fact, as we have seen, the cultural work that children’s books do goes far beyond entertaining children—they bridge the gap between generations, and they promote and reflect the values and aesthetics of their day.

## Appendix A

### CALDECOTT MEDAL WINNERS FROM 1938 TO 2018

#### By Author

Aardema, Verna – *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* (ill. DILLON, Leo & Diane) (1976)

Ackerman, Karen – *Song and Dance Man* (ill. GAMMELL, Stephen) (1989)

Bemelmans, Ludwig – *Madeline's Rescue* (1954)

Brown, Marcia – *Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper* (1955); *Once a Mouse* (1962)

Brown, Margaret Wise (pseud. Golden Macdonald) – *The Little Island* (ill. WEISGARD, Leonard) (1947)

Bunting, Eve – *Smoky Night* (ill. DIAZ, David) (1995)

Burton, Virginia Lee – *The Little House* (1943)

Cendrars, Blaise – *Shadow* (ill. BROWN, Marcia) (1983)

Cooney, Barbara – *Chanticleer and the Fox* (1959)

Cordell, Matthew – *Wolf in the Snow* (2018)

d'Aulaire, Ingri & Edgar Parin – *Abraham Lincoln* (1940)

de Regniers, Beatrice Schenk – *May I Bring a Friend?* (Ill. MONTRESOR, Beni) (1965)

Emberley, Barbara – *Drummer Hoff* (ill. EMBERLEY, Ed) (1968)

Ets, Marie Hall – *Nine Days to Christmas* (1960)

Field, Rachel – *Prayer for a Child* (ill. JONES, Elizabeth Orton) (1945)

Fish, Helen Dean, ed. – *Animals of the Bible, A Picture Book* (ill. LATHROP, Dorothy P.) (1938)

- Floca, Brian – *Locomotive* (2014)
- Gerstein, Mordecai – *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* (2004)
- Goble, Paul – *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses* (1979)
- Hader, Berta & Elmer – *The Big Snow* (1949)
- Haley, Gail E. – *A Story, A Story* (1971)
- Hall, Donald – *Ox-Cart Man* (ill. COONEY, Barbara) (1980)
- Handforth, Thomas – *Mei Li* (1939)
- Henkes, Kevin – *Kitten's First Full Moon* (2005)
- Hodges, Margaret – *Saint George and the Dragon* (ill. HYMAN, Trina Schart) (1985)
- Hogrogian, Nonny – *One Fine Day* (1972)
- Juster, Norton – *The Hello, Goodbye Window* (ill. RASCHKA, Chris) (2006)
- Keats, Ezra Jack – *The Snowy Day* (1963)
- Klassen, Jon – *This is Not My Hat* (2013)
- Langstaff, John – *Frog Went A-Courtin'* (ill. ROJANKOVSKY, Feodor) (1956)
- Lawson, Robert – *They Were Strong and Good* (1941)
- Leodhas, Sorche Nic (pseud. for Leclair Alger) – *Always Room for One More* (ill. HOGROGIAN, Nonny)(1966)
- Lobel, Arnold – *Fables* (1981)
- Macaulay, David – *Black and White* (1991)
- Mattick, Lindsay – *Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World's Most Famous Bear* (ill. BLACKALL, Sophie)(2016)
- Martin, Jacqueline Briggs – *Snowflake Bentley* (ill. AZARIAN, Mary)(1999)
- McCloskey, Robert – *Make Way for Ducklings* (1942); *Time of Wonder* (1958);

- McCully, Emily Arnold – *Mirette on the High Wire* (1993)
- McDermott, Gerald – *Arrow to the Sun* (1975)
- Milhous, Katherine – *The Egg Tree* (1951)
- Mosel, Arlene – *The Funny Little Woman* (ill. LENT, Blair) (1973)
- Musgrove, Margaret – *Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions* (ill. DILLON, Leo & Diane)(1977)
- Ness, Evaline – *Sam, Bangs & Moonshine* (1967)
- Petersham, Maud & Miska – *The Rooster Crows* (1946)
- Pinkney, Jerry – *The Lion & the Mouse* (2010)
- Politi, Leo – *Song of the Swallows* (1950)
- Provensen, Alice & Martin – *The Glorious Flight: Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot* (1984)
- Ransome, Arthur – *The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship* (ill. SHULEVITZ, Uri) (1969)
- Raschka, Chris – *A Ball for Daisy* (2012)
- Rathmann, Peggy – *Officer Buckle and Gloria* (1996)
- Robbins, Ruth – *Baboushka and the Three Kings* (ill. SIDJAKOV, Nicolas) (1961)
- Rohmann, Eric – *My Friend Rabbit* (2003)
- St. George, Judith – *So You Want to Be President?* (ill. SMALL, David) (2001)
- Santat, Dan – *The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend* (2015)
- Say, Allen – *Grandfather's Journey* (1994)
- Selznick, Brian – *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* (2008)
- Sendak, Maurice – *Where the Wild Things Are* (1964)

- Spier, Peter – *Noah's Ark* (1978)
- Stead, Philip C. – *A Sick Day for Amos McGee* (ill. STEAD, Erin E.) (2011)
- Steig, William – *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* (1970)
- Steptoe, Javaka – *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat* (2017)
- Swanson, Susan Marie – *The House in the Night* (ill. KROMMES, Beth) (2009)
- Taback, Simms – *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* (2000)
- Thurber, James – *Many Moons* (ill. SLOBODKIN, Louis) (1944)
- Tresselt, Alvin – *White Snow, Bright Snow* (ill. DUVOISIN, Roger) (1948)
- Udry, Janice – *A Tree is Nice* (ill. SIMONT, Marc) (1957)
- Van Allsburg, Chris – *Jumanji* (1982); *The Polar Express* (1986)
- Ward, Lynd – *The Biggest Bear* (1953)
- Wiesner, David – *Flotsam* (2007); *The Three Pigs* (2002); *Tuesday* (1992)
- Will (pseud. William Lipkind) – *Finders Keepers* (ill. MORDVINOFF, Nicholas) (1952)
- Wisniewski, David – *Golem* (1997)
- Yolen, Jane – *Owl Moon* (ill. SCHOENHERR, John) (1988)
- Yorinks, Arthur – *Hey, Al* (ill. EGIELSKI, Richard) (1987)
- Young, Ed – *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China* (1990)
- Zelinsky, Paul O. – *Rapunzel* (1998)
- Zemach, Harve – *Duffy and the Devil* (ill. ZEMACH, Margot) (1974)

## By Year

1938: *Animals of the Bible, A Picture Book* – ill. Dorothy P. Lathrop; text selected by Helen Dean Fish

1939: *Mei Li* – Thomas Handforth

1940: *Abraham Lincoln* – Ingri & Edgar Parin d'Aulaire

1941: *They Were Strong and Good* – Robert Lawson

1942: *Make Way for Ducklings* – Robert McCloskey

1943: *The Little House* – Virginia Lee Burton

1944: *Many Moons* – ill. Louis Slobodkin; text James Thurber

1945: *Prayer for a Child* – ill. Elizabeth Orton Jones; text Rachel Field

1946: *The Rooster Crows* – Maud & Miska Petersham

1947: *The Little Island* – ill. Leonard Weisgard; text Golden MacDonald (pseudonym for Margaret Wise Brown)

1948: *White Snow, Bright Snow* – ill. Roger Duvoisin; text Alvin Tresselt

1949: *The Big Snow* – Berta & Elmer Hader

1950: *Song of the Swallows* – Leo Politi

1951: *The Egg Tree* – Katherine Milhous

1952: *Finders Keepers* – ill. Nicolas (pseud. for Nicholas Mordvinoff); text Will (pseud. William Lipkind)

1953: *The Biggest Bear* – Lynd Ward

1954: *Madeline's Rescue* – Ludwig Bemelmans

1955: *Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper* – ill. Marcia Brown; text translated from Charles Perrault by Marcia Brown



- 1956: *Frog Went A-Courtin'* – ill. Feodor Rojankovsky; retold by John Langstaff
- 1957: *A Tree is Nice* – ill. Marc Simont; text Janice Udry
- 1958: *Time of Wonder* – Robert McCloskey
- 1959: *Chanticleer and the Fox* – ill. Barbara Cooney; text adapted from Chaucer by Barbara Cooney
- 1960: *Nine Days to Christmas* – ill. Marie Hall Ets; text Marie Hall Ets and Aurora Labastida
- 1961: *Baboushka and the Three Kings* – ill. Nicolas Sidjakov; text Ruth Robbins
- 1962: *Once a Mouse* – Marcia Brown
- 1963: *The Snowy Day* – Ezra Jack Keats
- 1964: *Where the Wild Things Are* – Maurice Sendak
- 1965: *May I Bring a Friend?* – ill. Beni Montresor; text Beatrice Schenk de Regniers
- 1966: *Always Room for One More* – ill. Nonny Hogrogian; text Sorche Nic Leodhas (pseud. Leclair Alger)
- 1967: *Sam, Bangs & Moonshine* – Evaline Ness
- 1968: *Drummer Hoff* – ill. Ed Emberley; text adapted by Barbara Emberley
- 1969: *The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship* – ill. Uri Shulevitz; text retold by Arthur Ransome
- 1970: *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* – William Steig
- 1971: *A Story, A Story* – Gail E. Haley
- 1972: *One Fine Day* – Nonny Hogrogian
- 1973: *The Funny Little Woman* – ill. Blair Lent; text retold by Arlene Mosel
- 1974: *Duffy and the Devil* – ill. Margot Zemach; text retold by Harve Zemach

- 1975: *Arrow to the Sun* – Gerald McDermott
- 1976: *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* – ill. Leo & Diane Dillon; text retold by Verna Aardema
- 1977: *Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions* – ill. Leo & Diane Dillon; text Margaret Musgrove
- 1978: *Noah's Ark* – Peter Spier
- 1979: *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses* – Paul Goble
- 1980: *Ox-Cart Man* – ill. Barbara Cooney; text Donald Hall
- 1981: *Fables* – Arnold Lobel
- 1982: *Jumanji* – Chris Van Allsburg
- 1983: *Shadow* – ill./text Marcia Brown; original text Blaise Cendrars
- 1984: *The Glorious Flight: Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot* – Alice & Martin Provensen
- 1985: *Saint George and the Dragon* – ill. Trina Schart Hyman; text retold by Margaret Hodges
- 1986: *The Polar Express* – Chris Van Allsburg
- 1987: *Hey, Al* – ill. Richard Egielski; text Arthur Yorinks
- 1988: *Owl Moon* – ill. John Schoenherr; text Jane Yolen
- 1989: *Song and Dance Man* – ill. Stephen Gammell; text Karen Ackerman
- 1990: *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China* – Ed Young
- 1991: *Black and White* – David Macaulay
- 1992: *Tuesday* – David Wiesner
- 1993: *Mirette on the High Wire* – Emily Arnold McCully

- 1994: *Grandfather's Journey* – Allen Say
- 1995: *Smoky Night* – ill. David Diaz; text Eve Bunting
- 1996: *Officer Buckle and Gloria* – Peggy Rathmann
- 1997: *Golem* – David Wisniewski
- 1998: *Rapunzel* – Paul O. Zelinsky
- 1999: *Snowflake Bentley* – ill. Mary Azarian; text Jacqueline Briggs Martin
- 2000: *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* – Simms Taback
- 2001: *So You Want to Be President?* – ill. David Small; text Judith St. George
- 2002: *The Three Pigs* – David Wiesner
- 2003: *My Friend Rabbit* – Eric Rohmann
- 2004: *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* – Mordicai Gerstein
- 2005: *Kitten's First Full Moon* – Kevin Henkes
- 2006: *The Hello, Goodbye Window* – ill. Chris Raschka; text Norton Juster
- 2007: *Flotsam* – David Wiesner
- 2008: *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* – Brian Selznick
- 2009: *The House in the Night* – ill. Beth Krommes; text Susan Marie Swanson
- 2010: *The Lion & the Mouse* – Jerry Pinkney
- 2011: *A Sick Day for Amos McGee* – ill. Erin E. Stead; text Philip C. Stead
- 2012: *A Ball for Daisy* – Chris Raschka
- 2013: *This is Not My Hat* – Jon Klassen
- 2014: *Locomotive* – Brian Floca
- 2015: *The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend* – Dan Santat

2016: *Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World's Most Famous Bear* – ill. Sophie Blackall; text Lindsay Mattick

2017: *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat* – Javaka Steptoe

2018: *Wolf in the Snow* – Matthew Cordell

## Appendix B

### TRENDS IN CHILDREN’S BOOKS

“Trends in Children’s Books: Five 2018 Predictions from Scholastic” By Porter Anderson, Editor-in-Chief. Anderson predicts the trends in children’s books for 2018 are as follows: along with my commentary (in bold text) following his.

1. More books will highlight strong female characters as role models for boys and girls.

**This has been seen in *Madeline’s Rescue* (1954) *Mariette on the High Wire* (1993) *Girl Who Loved Wild Horses* (1979), and *Wolf in the Snow* (2018).**

**This trend will definitely continue and is also seen in children’s movies: *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*, *Hotel Transylvania*’s three movies, *Brave*, and *Frozen*, among others. I predict that there will be more children’s books written on famous women. Presently there are children’s book about Michelle Obama, *Who Is Michelle Obama?* and Ruth Ginsburg, *I Look Up to Ruth Bader Ginsburg*.**

2. Kid-Friendly Nonfiction: “Scholastic editors are interested in “civics education and media literacy.” These non-fiction books will place the child-reader in a time, place or situation. Complex topics will be put forth, such as climate change, and wars.”

**This has been seen in past books: *Abraham Lincoln* (1940), *The Glorious Flight* (1984), *Smoky Night* (1995), *Golem* (1997), *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* (2004), and *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat* (his mother has mental problems) (2017).**

3. Iconic Series and Characters: In 2017 films and television reinvented literary characters for a new audience.

**This was seen in *Where the Wild Things Are* (1964), *Jumanji* (1982, turned into a box office hit), *The Polar Express* (1986, turned into a box office hit), and *The Three Pigs* (2002). This trend will always be popular and never fade with time.**

4. Fantasy worlds and creatures should maintain popularity: fantasy creatures will underscore the uniqueness of self.

**This was seen in *The Snowy Day* (1963), *Where the Wild Things Are* (1964), *Jumanji* (1982), *The Polar Express* (1986), *Hey Al* (1987), *Tuesday* (1992), *The Three Pigs* (2002), *Flotsam* (2007), *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* (2008), and *Wolf in the Snow* (2018). Note: *Wolf in the Snow* and *The Snowy Day* do not contain fantastic creatures but exemplify the uniqueness and or strength of character. My prediction is that more characters will be shown having strength in character and the uniqueness of self will be underscored.**

5. Activities books will be engaging, especially in the STEM area.: Many books will be paired with popular characters and franchises to attract more readers to the world of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as an educational category).

**This can be seen in *The Glorious Flight* (1984) and *Snowflake Bentley* (1999).**

## Appendix C

### EXPERIMENTAL CALDECOTT WINNERS

The following article is by Travis Jonker, an elementary school librarian and writer for The School Library Journal and former Caldecott committee (2014) member. He reveals his perspective on the most experimental Caldecott Winners of all time. His expertise shows another dimension of and insight on evaluating the Caldecotts.

#### The Most Experimental Caldecott Winners of all Time

##### 1. *The Little House* by Virginia Lee Burton. Caldecott Medal Year: 1943

Okay, I'm going to make a book where the main character is a house- the house won't move for almost the entire book. It probably surprised readers even more when it came out lo those many years ago.

##### 2. *Where the Wild Things Are*. Stories and Pictures by Maurice Sendak. Caldecott Medal Year: 1964

Not only did this story tick off prudish parents, but WTWTA remains the most well-known example of a picture book that used white space borders to wordlessly convey setting and tone.

##### 3. *Black and White* by David Macaulay. Caldecott Medal Year: 1991

This was the book that inspired this post. Have you read this book lately? Four seemingly separate stories (rendered in four different styles) slowly come together revealing a fifth. It's so unusual I am surprised a committee all came together to give it the medal (and I am thrilled they did).

##### 4. *Tuesday* by David Wiesner. Caldecott Medal Year: 1992

You knew the Wies-man was going to be on this list. All the guy does is experimental (for more recent proof-check out the cat cam he invented for his book *Mr. Wuffles!*)

5. *The Three Pigs* by David Wiesner. Caldecott Medal Year: 2002

Wiesner was just getting warmed up with *Tuesday*. With *The Three Pigs*, Wiesner explodes the form, deconstructing a famous fable and showing readers that anything can happen within a picture book. There were mega picture books before *The Three Pigs*, but here's guessing this book casts a large shadow over the meta books we're seeing today.

6. *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* by Brian Selznick. Caldecott Medal Year: 2008

Selznick mixed words in illustrations in a way that hadn't been done before. When it came out, it's stunned everyone. Just as experimental was the Caldecott committee who selected it, as it broke the Caldecott Medal mold. *Hugo Cabret* is the longest medal winner in history, as well as the first you have extended periods of just text.



## Appendix D

### GLOSSARY

#### **Glossary of the art terms used in this dissertation**

Abstract: “Non-representational; not depicting any recognizable subject matter; manipulation of subject matter into its parts (shapes, color, etc.) rather than portrayal of naturalistic appearance” (Lacy 217).

Adams, Ansel: Widely thought of as one of the most famous landscape photographers of all time. His famed black and white photography shows the gradations of light in the images.

Art Deco: “A popular design style of the 1920s and 1930s characterized especially by bold outlines, geometric and zigzag forms, and the use of new materials such as plastic)” (www.merriam-webster.com).

Batik: “A technique for hand-dyeing cloth using removable wax to repel dyes and then boiling the cloth to dissolve the wax and reveal undyed areas” (Hammond and Nordstrom 239).

Book design: “The total plan for physical arrangement of a book, including format, front matter, typeface, text placement in relation to artwork, medium employed, and artistic

style” (Lacy 217).

Byzantine: “Of the art from the East Roman Empire, from the 5th c, AD to the fall of Constantinople and 1453. Such art is usually Hieratic and other-worldly” (Smith 37).

Cartoon art: “A style of art reminiscent of comics; may employ comics conventions such as speech balloons and panels, but not always “(Hammond and Nordstrom 239).

Chiaroscuro: “Contrasting light and dark; light brightening one side of an object while the other side is darkened” (Hammond and Nordstrom 239).

Chinese ink: “Black ink in solid form, mixed with a binding agent and molded into cakes or sticks” (Hammond and Nordstrom 240).

Circular or Chain story: A story that begins and ends in the same place, such as *Where the Wild Things Are*.

Collage: “A variety of materials such as paper, fabric, wood, or objects adhered to a flat surface” (Hammond and Nordstrom 240).

Color: “Pigments’ abilities to absorb, transmit, or reflect light; colors may be classified as primaries (red, yellow, blue), used to create secondaries (green, orange, violet)” (Lacy 217).

Color Separation: “The process of separating individual color components (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black) in artwork for printing; a plate or film for each color prepared and printed separately, one on top of the other, allowing for the production of a wide spectrum of colors on a printed page; also called pre-separated art”(Hammond and Nordstrom 240).

Color temperature: “Psychological sensation in which yellows, oranges, reds (associated with sun and fire) are considered warm and appear to advance toward the audience, while greens, blues, violets (associated with water, sky, and trees) are considered cool and appear to recede” (Lacy 217).

Composition: “Organization of artistic elements in relation to each other and to the whole; the process of design; close is anchored firmly within its frame; and open composition suggests further activity outside the frame” (Lacy 218).

Conte pencil: “A hard pencil made of graphite and clay; sometimes referred to as a conte crayon” (Hammond and Nordstrom 240).

Cross hatching: “Criss-crossed parallel lines used to increase value or produce shading” (Hammond and Nordstrom 240).

Cryptesthesia: “Use of images hidden within other images” (Lacy 218).

Cubism: “An art movement which came into being c. 1909, led by Picasso and Braque and with its roots in theories put forward by Cezanne. It was an attempt to represent fully and exhaustively on a flat surface all aspects of what the artists saw in three dimensions” (Lucie-Smith 61). ““Subjects and objects in Cubism are broken up into pieces and re-arranged in an abstract form”” (Picasso, qtd. in Lucie-Smith 61).

Depth: “Implied for ground middle ground, and or background achieved through interplay of lines, overlapping, and changes in correlation” (Lacy 218).

Die-cuts: “Shapes cut into paper or cardboard with sharp steel knives or a metal form” (Hammond and Nordstrom 240).

Digital art: “Art that is created, enhanced, or manipulated with the use of a computer” (Hammond and Nordstrom 241).

Easy-to-read book: “A book with controlled, limited vocabulary for beginning readers” (Lacy 218).

Expressionist: “1. A term first popularized by the German art critic Herwarth Walden, publisher of the Berlin Avant-Garde review *Der Sturm* (1910-1932), to characterize all the modern art opposed to Impressionism. 2. Later, art in which the forms arise, not directly from observed reality, but from subjective reactions to reality. 3. Today, any art in which conventional ideas of realism and proportion seem to have been overridden by the artist’s

emotion, which results in distortions of shape and colour” (Lucie-Smith 79).

Flat: “Color with no variation of value, no contrast between lightness and darkness” (Hammond and Nordstrom 240).

Focal point: “The place in a composition that draws the viewer’s interest or attention” (Hammond and Nordstrom 241).

Folk art: “Utilitarian creation reflecting traditional motifs of a culture and intended as decoration, instruction, or documentation for a specific audience. Folk art is an art style reflective of a particular culture that may incorporate stylized patterns, simple shapes, and lack of perspective in proportion” (Hammond and Nordstrom 241).

Gestural art: “Lines that look closely and loosely drawn to capture a moment, a movement, or an expression” (Hammond and Nordstrom 241).

Grisaille: “Painting in grays” (Lacy 219).

Gouache: “Opaque watercolor paint that dries to a flat, even color” (Hammond and Nordstrom 241).

Illustration: “Visual image as extension of text; decorated illustrations are loosely related to the text and mainly serve to embellish printed matter; instructional illustrations offered

visual information that elucidate text; documentary illustrations chronicle fictional or factual events, faces, or figures” (Lacy 219).

Impressionism: “French 19<sup>th</sup>-c. art movement, which tried to use contemporary scientific research into the physics of color (including work carried out by Eugene Chevreul) to achieve a more exact representation of colour and tone. The majority of the Impressionists applied paint in small touches of pure colour rather than broader, blended strokes, thus making pictures which seemed dazzlingly brighter than those of contemporary salon artists. They also believe in painting outdoors, and in trying to catch a particular fleeting impression of color and light rather than making a synthesis in the studio. The painters connected with the movement came together just before the Franco-Prussian war 1870-71. The First Impressionist Exhibition was held in 1874, and included work by Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Pissarro, Cezanne, Degas, Guillaumin, Boudin, and Berthe Morisot” (Lucie-Smith 103).

India ink: “Black ink made from carbon” (Hammond and Nordstrom 241).

Letterpress: “A process of rotary gravure printing using a relief surface” (Lacy 220).

Light and dark: “As an artistic element is concerned with an artist’s demonstration of interest or disinterest in a natural or an artificial source of illumination and in the contrast or graduation of value in colors and color forms for implied contour, texture, and depth” (Lacy 5).

Linear style: “Emphasizes the drawn line or, in painting, the draftsman like approach of outlines and contour lines for closed shapes and space” (Lacy 5).

Lithograph: “A print made from an image drawn with a grease pencil on a special plate or stone over which ink is rolled; the ink adheres to the grease, and the image is transferred to paper pressed over the stone “(Hammond and Nordstrom 241).

Lithography: “Use of plain or flat surface for planographic printing” (Lacy 220).

Montage: “Interconnected plots, images, or ideas compressed within a single setting” (Lacy 220).

Munch, Edvard: *The Scream* is Munch’s most famous work, and one of the most recognizable paintings in all art. *The Scream* exists in four versions: two pastels and two paintings. There are also several lithographs. *The Scream* in pastel sold at Sotheby’s Auction in New York for nearly \$ 120 Million in 2012. The expressionist use of colors and exaggerated line and shapes immediately convey a specific meaning to almost all viewers.

Mural, mural painting: “Any painting made directly on a wall, or fastened permanently to a wall” (Lucie-Smith 127).

Narrative illustration: “Sequence of pictures that portray one continuous plot having a

beginning, middle, and an end; may be decorative, instructional, documentary, or in combination but additionally fleshes out characteristics visually, gives events pictorial substance, indicates a cause-and-effect relationship from one picture to another, and develops atmosphere of time and place pictorially in a way that often results in a visual account apart from text” (Lacy 220).

Negative shape: “Empty, unfilled space in a composition” (Lacy 220).

Neo-impressionism: “An offshoot of Impressionism which subjected Impressionistic techniques to rigorous intellectual analysis. Seurat was its leader, and Signac and (for a while) Camille Pissarro were among its chief adherents. It was characterized by the use of Divisionism and by strictly formal compositions “(Lucie-Smith 128).

Painterly style: “Emphasizes more sensuous rendering of open shapes and space by areas of color and tone rather than lines. A style in which paint is added within lines emphasizes color and tone applied within outlines for closed shapes and space” (Lacy 5).

Perspective aerial: “Perspective indicates distance through blurring lines and color, decrease in sizes, diminishment of the details; *linear* or *geometric* perspective is based on calculated alterations in figures sizes, directions, and placements within composition, falling into three systems: *parallel* perspective, in which lines are parallel to all sides of the picture’s edge and a center vanishing point generally corresponds to the audience’s viewpoint; *angular* perspective, in which vertical lines are parallel with the sides but



more than one vanishing point is implied for other lines; and *oblique* or tilted perspective, in which lines are not parallel with any sides, and vertical lines may converge either up or down” (Lacy 221).

Picasso, Pablo: “Is probably the most important figure of the twentieth century, in terms of art, and art movements that occurred over this period. Before the age of 50, the Spanish born artist had become the most well-known name in modern art, with the most distinct style and eye for artistic creation. There has been no other, prior to Picasso, who had such an impact on the art world, or had a mass following of fans and critics alike, as he did” (*Pablo Picasso*).

Realism: “Exact appearance with no distortion, idealization, or hierarchical characteristics for expressive purposes” (Lacy 221).

Release printing: “Use of raised surface as in woodcut” (Lacy 221). Often seen in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Sepia: “A brown pigment made from cuttlefish ink” (Lucie-Smith 168).

Shape: “Is two dimensional pictures, as opposed to three-dimensional form in sculpture, and is usually thought of as irregularly organic, as found in nature, as found in the superficial or mathematically precise world of human made object” (Lacy 5).

Space: “As an element is ‘into’ a picture, and the illusion may be deep, shallow, or flat (also called planar). Use of line, color, light and dark, and shape are combined to create space as an artist’s perspective that becomes the audience’s viewpoint” (Lacy 5).

Speech balloon: “A balloon-like graphic in which the characters speech is enclosed” (Hammond and Nordstrom 243).

Stippling: “Making dots to create shading or simulate texture; may be done with a brush or even bristles or other tools. Can also be done with a technical pen and ink in which the image is drawn dot by dot. Pointillism is very closely related to stippling in that the artist uses brushes and different color paints to create the whole composition. This approach incorporates soft flickers of color by using small dots or strokes of color. George Seurat is chiefly remembered as the pioneer of the neo-impressionist technique commonly known as divisionism or pointillism” (Hammond and Nordstrom 243).

Stylization: “Alteration or modification of appearance to emphasize preconceived universal physical characteristics, resulting in ideal types not as they truly are but as they should be” (Lacy 223).

Surrealism: “Is a cultural movement and artistic style that was founded in 1924 by Andre Breton. Surrealism style uses visual imagery from the subconscious mind to create art without the intention of logical comprehensibility. Some of the greatest artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century became involved in this surrealist movement, and the group included Giorgio de

Chirico, Man Ray, Renée Magritte, and many others. The greatest known surrealist artist is the world famous Salvador Dali” (*Surrealism*).

Symmetry: “Formal balance with and agreement of parts on opposite sides of a perceived midline” (Hammond and Nordstrom 243).

Texture: “Related to the sense of touch, tactile, either actual or implied” (Lacy 223).

Unreal image: “Presentation of an otherworldly creation derived purely from the artist’s imagination or dreams” (Lacy 223).

Value ladder: “Range of a hue from lightest (also called high-value or high key) to darkest (also called low value or low key) with gradual transitions in between” (Lacy 223).

Vignette: “Small illustrations; sometimes-called spot illustration” (Hammond and Nordstrom 244).

Visual literacy: “The audience’s ability to distinguish between reality and unreality, to appreciate use of details that contribute to the whole, to identify unique properties of the artistic medium used, and to understand the main idea intended by the visual; also called *visual discrimination*” (Lacy 223).

Wash “A hue or tint applied in a thin transparent layer” (Lucie-Smith 198).

Watercolor: Transparent paint of pigment mixed with water” (Hammond and Nordstrom 244).

Woodblock print: “Image created by carving away portions of a drawing on a wood block, leaving raised areas that are inked before the block is pressed to paper” (Hammond and Nordstrom 244).

## **Glossary of genres of children's literature**

The development of children's fiction: Prior to the 1920s, fiction books mostly consisted of books from the popular series books of that time, which were *The Bobbsey Twins*, *Tom Swift* and *The Motor Girls*. Then in 1919-1924 just after World War I ended (1918), children's books began to grow when publishing houses set up divisions for children's books. Thereafter, the *Horn Book Magazine* was founded, Children's Book Week was established, and most importantly the Newbery Medal was created to encourage writers and publishers to produce high quality books for children. These events greatly changed the trajectory of children's literature and fiction series books became popular during this period: *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1920s), the *Milly-Molly-Mandy Storybook* (1928), and *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* (1920), among others. Children's librarians had a strong influence in setting the standards for children's fiction. Series fiction popularity faded in time but never completely.

### *Literary Genres*

Realism: Typically defined as something in a story that could happen in the real world.

This category is very popular for authors and readers. Realism is further subcategorized:

Contemporary realistic fiction: Are stories that are set in the here and now. These stories can deal with serious, sad issues but can also be of a lighter nature.

Historical fiction: Are stories that are usually set in the past, the time period must be identifiable to the reader; by bringing unfamiliar events, common everyday occurrences coupled with historical context, so the reader will understand the time period. It is without question that the author needs to present the historical era

with accuracy.

Early Childhood Books: Books written for children birth through age 6.

Concept: Picture books that present numerous examples of a particular concept, such as the common colors

Alphabet: A concept book that presents letters of the alphabet.

Counting: A concept book that presents the counting numbers.

General: A concept books that present other common concepts such as color and opposites.

Pattern books: Predictable books that contain repetitive words, phrases, questions, or structure.

Wordless books: Books in which the story is revealed through a sequence of illustrations with no—or very few—words.

Traditional Literature: Stories, songs, and rhymes with unknown authorship that were passed down orally through generations.

Myths: Traditional religious stories that provide explanations for natural phenomena, usually containing deities as characters.

Fables: Very brief traditional stories that teach a lesson about behavior, usually with animal characters.

Ballads: Traditional stories that were sung as narrative poems.

Legends: Traditional stories that combine history and myth, based in part on real people or historical events.

Tall tales: Exaggerated stories with gigantic, extravagant, and flamboyant characters.

Fairy tales: Traditional stories written for entertainment, usually with magic and fantastical characters.

Traditional rhymes: Traditional verses intended for very young children.

Fiction: Literary works designed to entertain; the content being produced by the imagination of identifiable authors.

Fantasy: Fiction story with highly fanciful or supernatural elements that would be impossible in real life.

Animal fantasy: Fantasy in which the main characters are anthropomorphic animals that display human characteristics.

Contemporary realistic fiction: Fictional story set in modern times with events that could possibly occur.

Historical fiction: Realistic story in a real world setting in the historical past with events that are partly historical but largely imaginative.

Biography and Autobiography: Nonfiction works describing the life (or part of the life) of a real individual.

Informational Books: Trade books with the primary purpose of informing the reader by providing an in-depth explanation of factual material.

Poetry and Verse: Verse in which word images are selected and expressed to create strong, often beautiful, impressions.

Folktales: The Folktale genre covers several different types of stories. In general, folktales are short stories that have been passed down orally from generation to generation, which include fairy tales, myths, tall tales, legends and fables.



## Appendix E

### CATEGORIZATION OF CALDECOTT BOOKS

#### Caldecott Award-Winning Books for the Winter:

White Snow Bright Snow (1948)

The Big Snow (1949)

Nine Days to Christmas (1960)

Baboushka and the Three kings (1961)

The Snowy Day (1963)

The Polar Express (1986).

Owl Moon (1988)

Snowflake Bentley (1999)

Wolf in the Snow (2018)

#### Caldecott Award-Winning Books for the Summer:

The Little Island (1947)

Time of Wonder (1958)

#### Caldecott Award-Winning Wordless Picture Books:

Black and White (1991)

Tuesday (1992)

My Friend Rabbit (almost wordless) (2003)

Flotsam (2007)

The Lion and the Mouse (2010)

A Ball for Daisy (2012)

Wolf in the Snow (2018)

Caldecott Award-Winning Nonfiction Books:

Abraham Lincoln (1940)

The Glorious Flight (1984)

Grandfather's Journey (1994)

Snowflake Bentley (1999)

So You Want To Be President? (2001)

The Man Who Walked Between the Towers (2004)

Locomotive (2014)

Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World's Most Famous Bear (2016)

Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist-Jean Michel Basquiat (2017)

Caldecott Award-Winning Fables:

Chanticleer and the Fox (1959)

Once a Mouse . . . (Indian fable) (1962)

Fables (1981)

The Lion and the Mouse (2010)

Caldecott Award-Winning Fairy Tales:

Cinderella or the Little Glass Slipper (1955)

The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses (1979)

Lon Po Po: A Red Riding Hood Story from China (1990)

Rapunzel (1998)

The Three Pigs (2002)

Caldecott Award-Winning Tales:

Baboushka and the Three Kings (Russian folktale) (1961)

The Fool of The World and The Flying Ship (1969)

A Story, A Story (An African Tale Retold) (1971)

One Fine Day: A Sequencing Tale (1972)

Arrow to the Sun (1975)

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears (West African Tale) (1976)

Caldecott Award-Winning Folklore:

The Funny Little Women (1973)

Saint George and the Dragon (1985)

Golem (1997)

Caldecott Award Books Where Morality is Stressed:

Sam Bangs & Moonshine (1967)

Duffy and the Devil (1974)

This is Not My Hat (2013)

Caldecott Award Religious Books:

Animals of the Bible, a Picture Book (1938)

Prayer for a Child (1945)

Song of the Swallows (St. Joseph's Day) (1950)

The Egg Tree (Easter) (1951)

Nine Days to Christmas (1960)

Baboushka and the Three Kings (1961)

Noah's Ark (1978)

Golem (1997)

Caldecott Award-Winning Legend Books:

Saint George and the Dragon (1985)

Golem (1997)

Caldecott Award Lyrical Journey and Folksong:

Ox-Cart Man (1980)

Joseph Had a Little Overcoat (2000)

Caldecott Award-Winning Historical Fiction:

Song and Dance Man (1989)

Mariette on the High Wire (1993)

Smoky Night (1995)

The Invention of Hugo Cabret (2008)

Caldecott Award Book on Loss:

A Ball for Daisy (2012)

Caldecott Award-Winning Books with a Strong Female Character:

Mei Li (1939)

Madeline's Rescue (1954)

The Adventures of Beekle (2015)

Wolf in the Snow (2018)

Caldecott Award-Winning Books on Nature, the Environment and Commercial Progress:

The Little House (1943)

The Little Island (1947)

White Snow Bright Snow (1948)

The Big Snow (1949)

A Tree is Nice (1957)

Time of Wonder (1958)

The Snowy Day (1963)

Snowflake Bentley (1999)

Wolf in the Snow (2018)

Appendix F

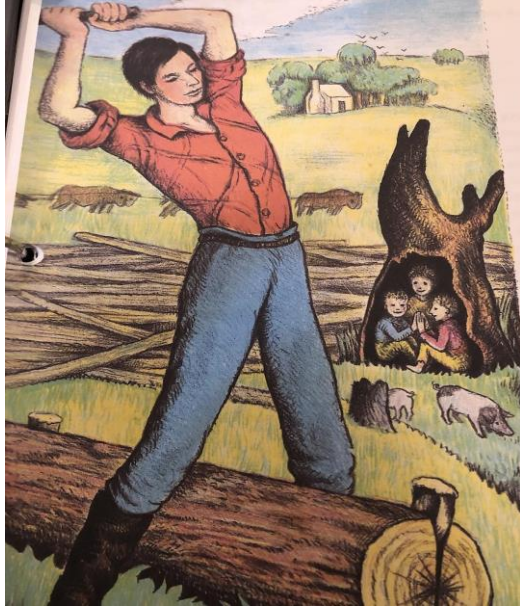
PICTURE BOOK ILLUSTRATIONS



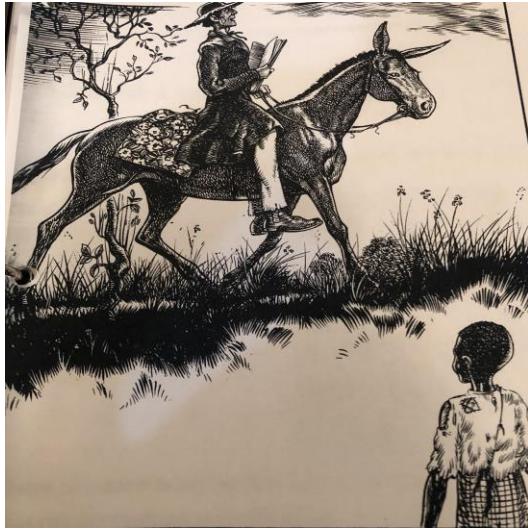
**1938: *Animals of the Bible, A Picture Book***



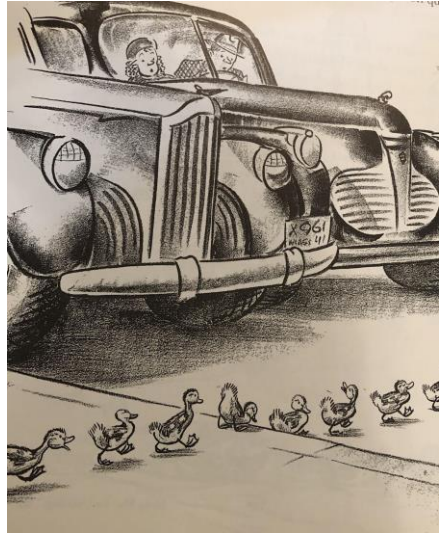
**1939: *Mei Li***



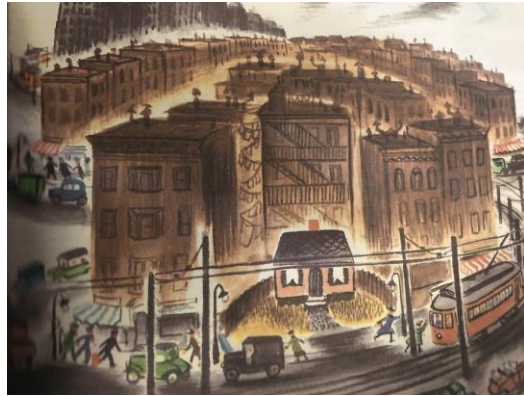
**1940: *Abraham Lincoln***



**1941: *They Were Strong and Good***



**1942:** *Make Way for Ducklings*



**1943:** *The Little House*





**1944:** *Many Moons*



**1945:** *Prayer for a Child*



**1946: *The Rooster Crows***



**1947: *The Little Island***



**1948: *White Snow, Bright Snow***



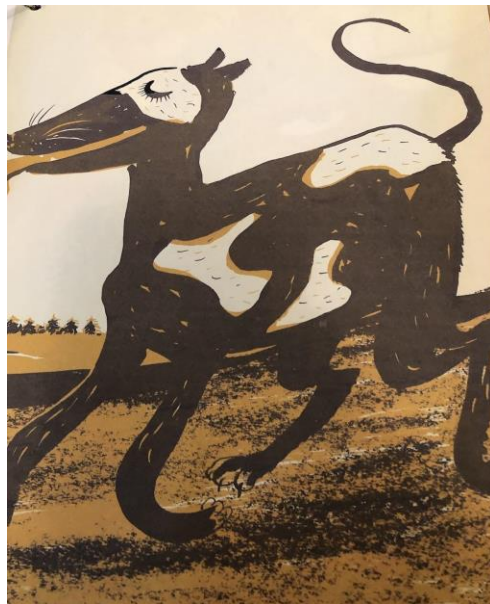
**1949: *The Big Snow***



**1950: *Song of the Swallows***



**1951: *The Egg Tree***

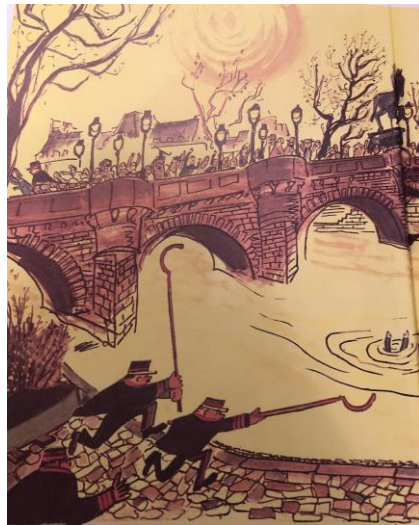


**1952: *Finders Keepers***





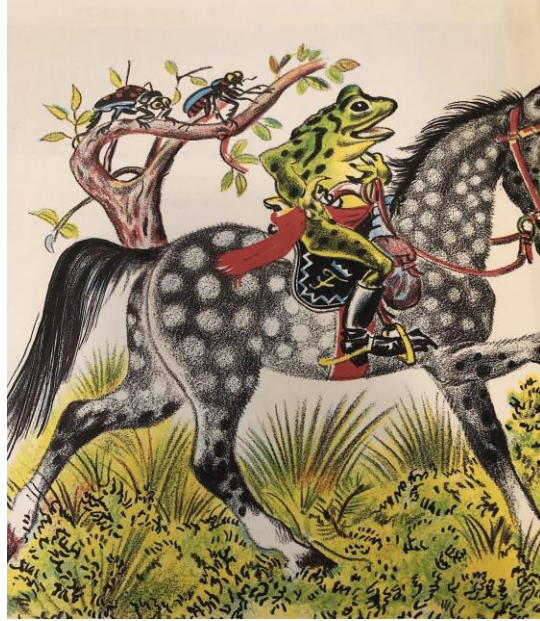
**1953: *The Biggest Bear***



**1954: *Madeline's Rescue***



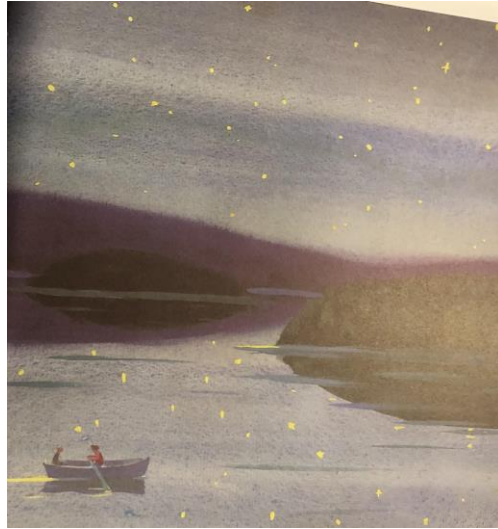
**1955: *Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper***



**1956: *Frog Went A-Courtin'***



**1957: *A Tree Is Nice***



**1958: *Time of Wonder***



**1959: *Chanticleer and the Fox***



**1960: *Nine Days to Christmas***



**1961: *Baboushka and the Three Kings***



**1962: *Once a Mouse***





**1963:** *The Snowy Day*



**1964:** *Where the Wild Things Are*



**1965:** *May I Bring a Friend?*



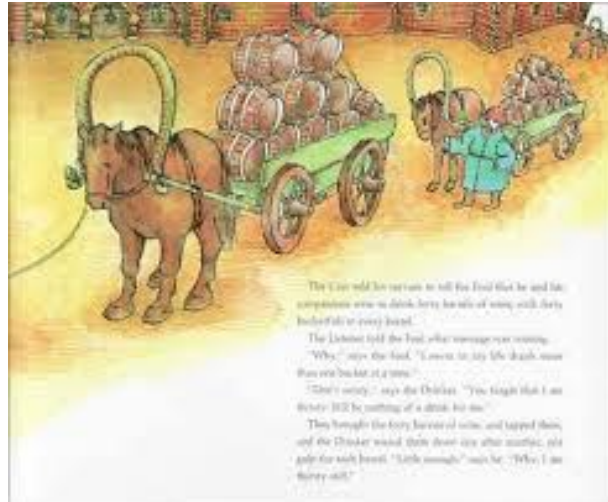
**1966: *Always Room for One More***



**1967: *Sam, Bangs & Moonshine***



**1968: *Drummer Hoff***

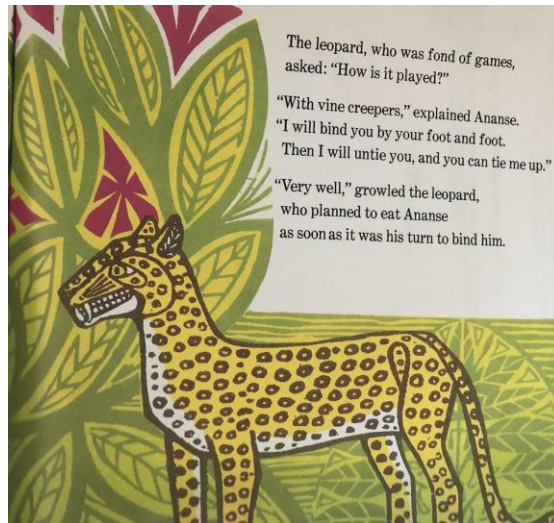


***1969: The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship***

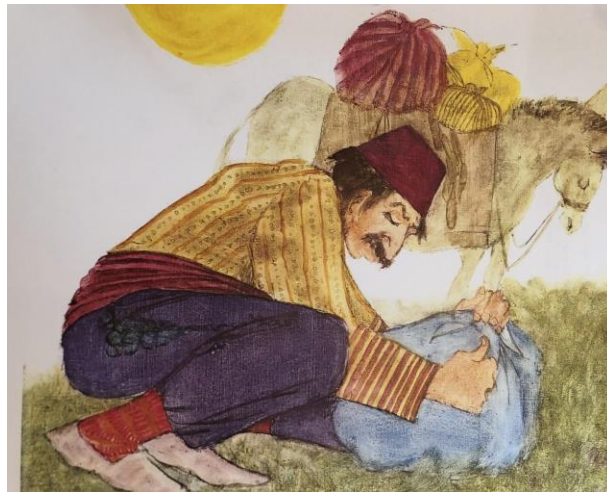


***1970: Sylvester and the Magic Pebble***





**1971: *A Story, A Story***



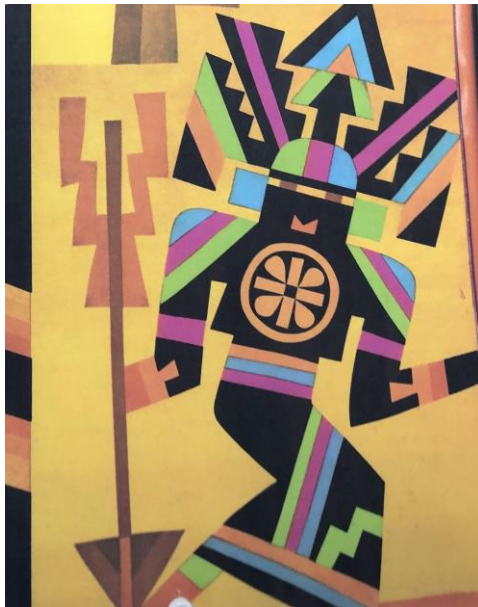
**1972: *One Fine Day***



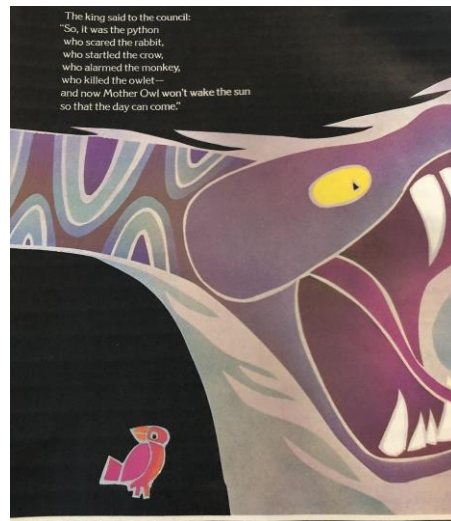
**1973: *The Funny Little Woman***



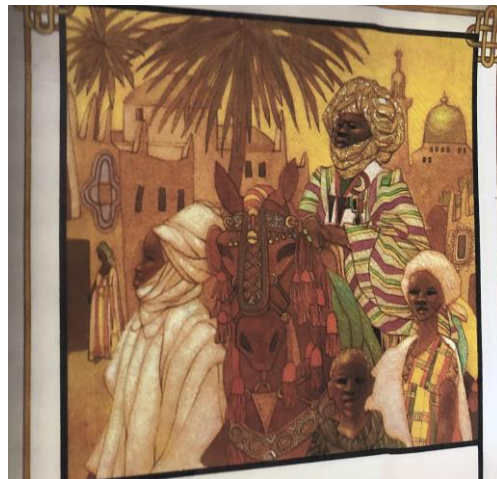
**1974:** *Duffy and the Devil*



**1975:** *Arrow to the Sun*



**1976: *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears***



**1977: *Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions***



**1978: *Noah's Ark***





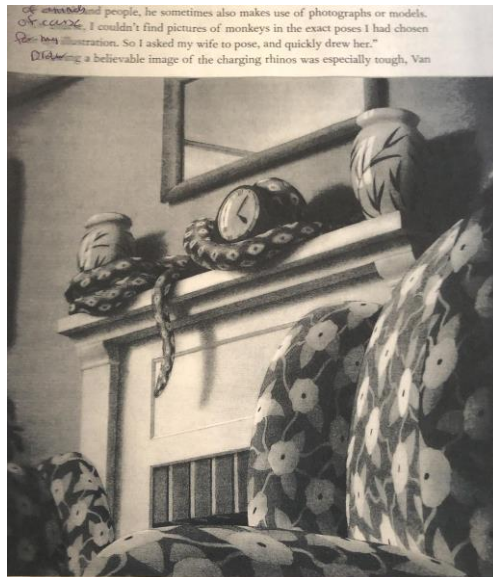
**1979: *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses***



**1980: *Ox-Cart Man***



**1981: *Fables***



**1982: *Jumanji***





1983: *Shadow*



1984: *The Glorious Flight: Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot*



1985: *Saint George and the Dragon*



**1986:** *The Polar Express*



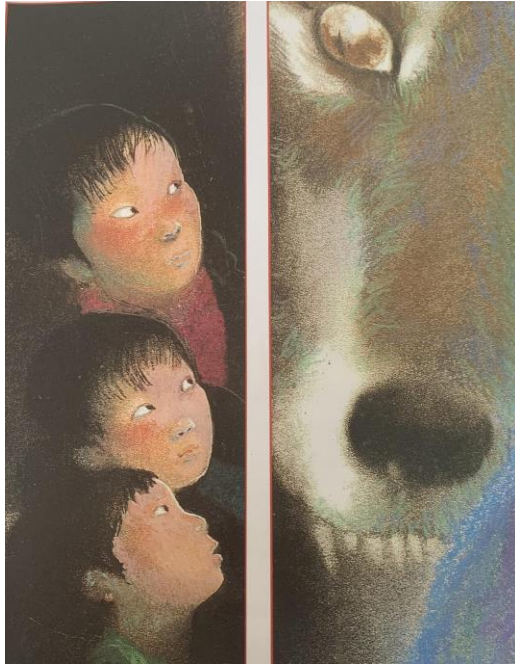
**1987:** *Hey, Al*



**1988: *Owl Moon***



**1989: *Song and Dance Man***



**1990:** *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China*



**1991:** *Black and White*



**1992:** *Tuesday*





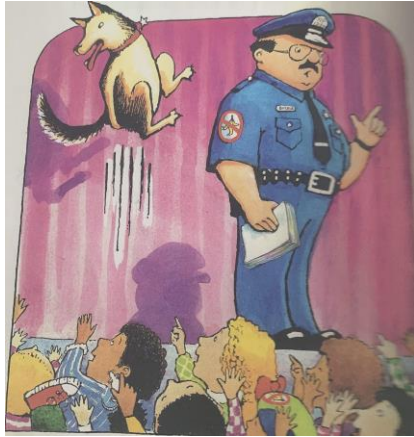
1993: *Mirette on the High Wire*



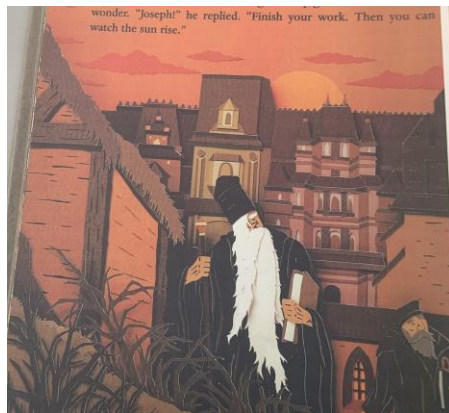
1994: *Grandfather's Journey*



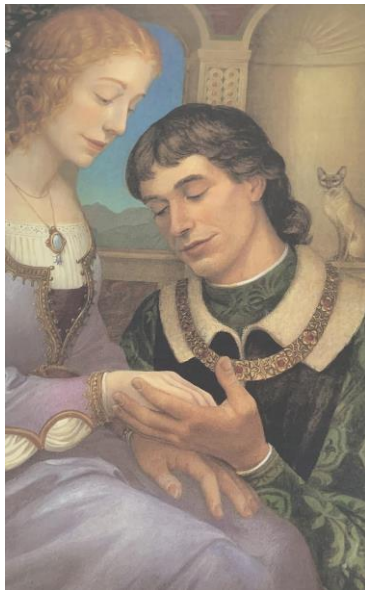
1995: *Smoky Night*



**1996: *Officer Buckle and Gloria***



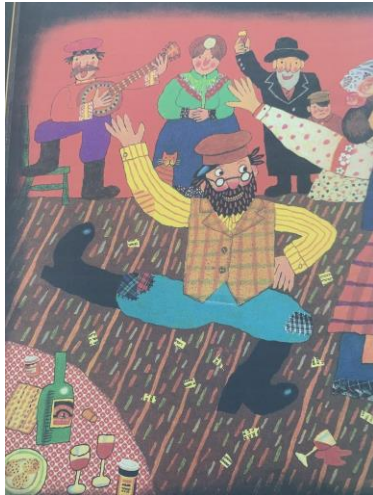
**1997: *Golem***



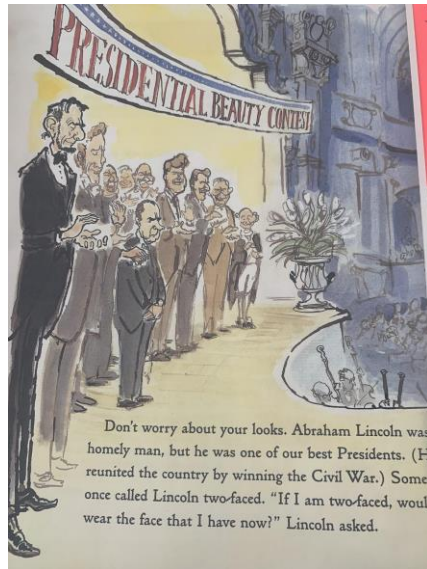
**1998: *Rapunzel***



**1999: *Snowflake Bentley***



**2000: *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat***



**2001: *So You Want to Be President?***

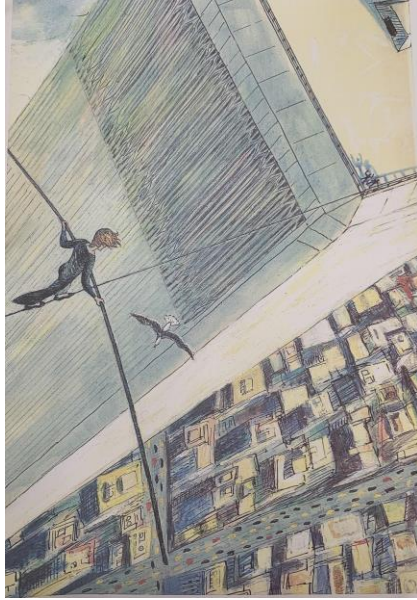


**2002: *The Three Pigs***



**2003: *My Friend Rabbit***





**2004:** *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*



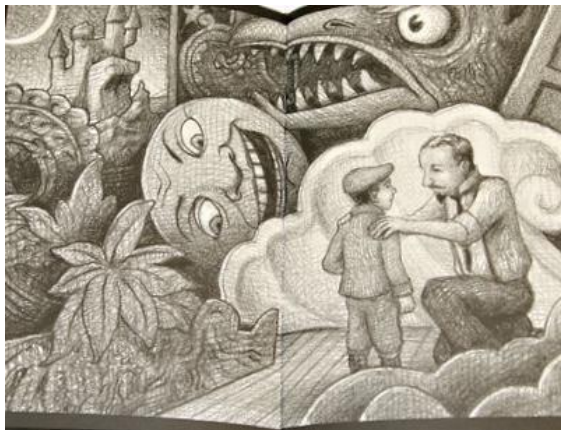
**2005:** *Kitten's First Full Moon*



**2006: *The Hello, Goodbye Window***



**2007: *Flotsam***



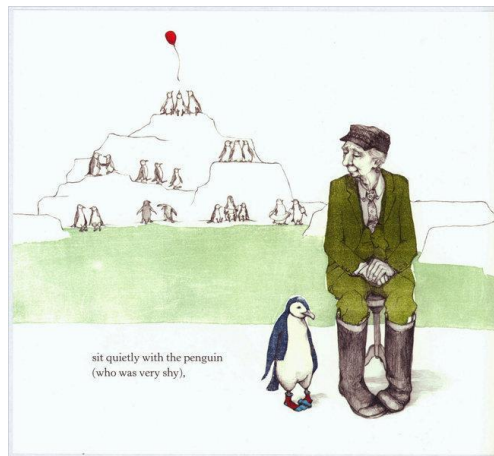
**2008: *The Invention of Hugo Cabret***



**2009:** *The House in the Night*



**2010:** *The Lion and the Mouse*



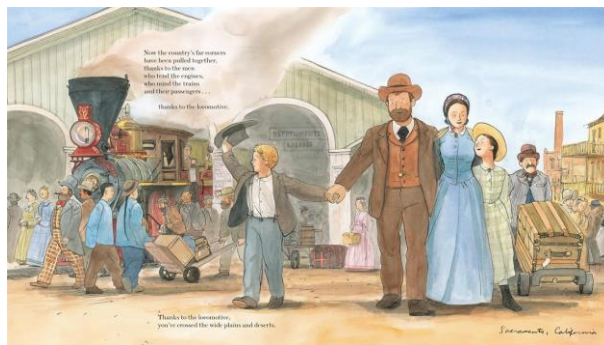
**2011:** *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*



**2012:** *A Ball for Daisy*



**2013:** *This Is Not My Hat*



**2014:** *Locomotive*

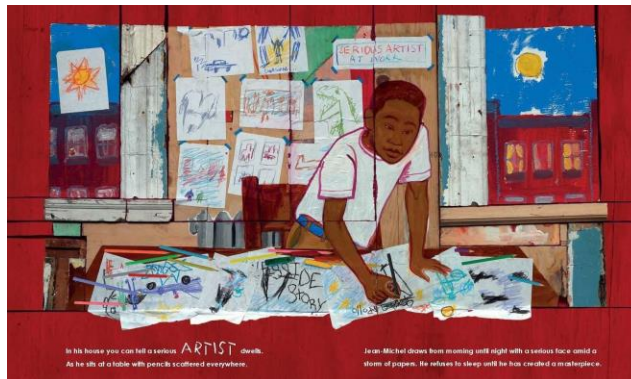




**2015: *The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend***



**2016: *Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World's Most Famous Bear***



**2017: *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat***



**2018: *Wolf in the Snow***

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