

The Anne Izard Storytellers' Choice Award – THE SINGLE STORY

1992 - 2019.

This award was established to honor Anne Izard, the noted librarian, storyteller and Children's Services Consultant in Westchester County (NY) who died in 1990.

It is hoped the award will highlight and promote distinguished titles published in the field of storytelling and in doing so, bring the many riches of storytelling itself to a much greater public recognition.

Please note: award year noted in parenthesis at the end of annotation.

Barber, Antonia. *The Mousehole Cat*. Macmillan, 1990. This Cornish legend, retold from a feline point of view, tells of a fisherman and his cat who brave the perils of a winter storm to bring a catch of fish to their starving village and whose courage is still celebrated in that village every Christmas. Barber's language is descriptive, well-paced, rhythmic and sprinkled with names of Cornish foods ("star-gazy pie, soused scad") to roll around the teller's mouth. (1992)

Bateman, Teresa. *Job Wanted*. Holiday House, 2015. A farm needs a dog, right? This weary dog plods along, looking for a job...and a home. When a farmer turns him away, the dog gets creative! He "becomes" a cow? A horse? A chicken?? Teresa Bateman's comedic, clever, and easily tellable original story fits in a variety of settings, much like a certain dog. (2017)

Bateman, Teresa. *The Leprechaun under the Bed*. Illustrated by Paul Meisel. Holiday House, 2012. *Never* build your house directly over the home of a leprechaun. Sean McDonald is kept awake nights by the little fellow who is forced to make a new front door right under Sean's bed. Realizing under-the-bed sounds must be coming from a leprechaun, Sean remembers his "saintly mother's wisdom": a leprechaun in the house brings - *Luck!* Not wanting to lose that luck, Sean feeds the little fellow whenever he himself eats; such kindness is rewarded not once, not twice, but *three* times. This original story is told in a folkloric style with lots of humor. It is easy-to-tell, appropriate for both beginning and experienced tellers, and suitable for children or family audiences. (2013)

Bateman, Teresa. *The Ring of Truth*. Holiday House, 1997. An original tale with the flavor of time-tested folklore, this tells of Patrick O'Kelly whose stories are so outrageous that people feel sure he must have kissed the Blarney Stone. When presented by the king of the leprechauns with a magical ring that compels him to speak the truth, Patrick discovers to his nimble-tongued astonishment that truth proves more incredible than blarney. With its vivid language and rollicking humor, this is a tale sure to win its way into many a storytelling bag of tricks. (1998)

Bruchac, Joseph. *The Hunter's Promise*. Illustrated by Bill Farnsworth. Wisdom Tales, 2015. A mysterious wife comes to a hunter each winter; each spring she and their children return to the forest without him. His promises to her are tested when the daughter of the village chief schemes to take the hunter for her own. While addressing matters of trust, integrity, and loyalty, this story also evokes deep questions about sacred connections to both the spirit world and the natural world. Bruchac's supple and understated storytelling shines again in this traditional Wabanaki Confederacy story. (2017)

Casanova, Mary. *The Hunter*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2000. Searching for food to feed his starving village, a young hunter rescues a small snake. He is rewarded for his kindness by the snake's father, the Dragon King, with the gift of understanding the language of animals—a gift that must remain a secret. And so it does, until the hunter learns from the animals about an impending flood that threatens his village. With cadenced, elegant prose this beautifully told story from the Chinese culture celebrates self-sacrifice for the sake of others. Casanova's delicate touch honors the haunting, bittersweet quality of the story, which she first heard from a foreign exchange student who was staying with her. (2002)

Churnin, Nancy. *Manjhi Moves a Mountain*. Illustrated by Danny Popovici. Creston Books, 2017. The mountain would not come to Manjhi any more than it would to Mohammed. Manjhi faced his mountain and carved a path through it from 1960 to 1982, one shovelful at a time. Manjhi's epic, twenty two-year achievement brought a world of new opportunities to his

impoverished Indian village. This true story shows the determination, self-sacrifice, and profound courage of an “ordinary” man. (2019)

Clafin, Willy. *Rapunzel and the Seven Dwarfs: A Maynard Moose Tale.* Illustrated by James Stimson. August House, 2011. Storyteller Willy Clafin is "speaking-mouth-person" to his puppet companion, Maynard Moose, who tells Mother Moose stories. In Maynard's "traditional" version of Rapunzel, it takes the Handsome Prince a few tries to get her to "let down the hair"; twice she mishears him and sends down a pear and a chair. Things then go rapidly awry: Rapunzel ends up with the "eight or nine Seven Dwarfs" and there's a beautiful snow-white moose in there too. This zany fractured fairy tale is all the more hilarious because of Clafin's intelligence behind, under, and all through it. Written in Maynard's distinctive speaking style, an audio CD rounds out the full listening experience. (2013)

Cole, Brock. *Good Enough to Eat.* Farrar Straus Giroux, 2007. When an ogre comes to town demanding a bride, the town decides to sacrifice a poor nameless girl—referred to as Scraps-and-Smells by some, Skin-and-Bones by others or Sweets-and-Treats by still others. With lilting language, Cole tells the captivating story of a brave and clever girl—who outsmarts an ogre, shows up a town, and earns herself a name. (2009)

Cox, Judy. *One Is a Feast for Mouse: A Thanksgiving Tale.* Holiday House, 2008. It all starts with a pea, and then a cranberry, and then.... well, a delicious Thanksgiving feast of a tale featuring Mouse with eyes MUCH bigger than his stomach and a sly, sneaking-up cat. It ends with a pea, too, but not before Mouse and Cat have the expected encounter with unexpected consequences. The delicious language begs to be told aloud with young children. They'll want to join right in the refrain that reminds us all to be grateful for small things (like this story!). (2009)

Cronin, Doreen. *Bloom.* Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2016. A fairy with mud on her boots and bugs in her teeth? Bloom splinters images of fairies as delicate creatures, and takes up the older tradition of faerie as trickster. When a glass kingdom needs saving, Bloom shares powerful magic with an extraordinary girl. Doreen Cronin's original story bends an ordinary fairy tale depiction with a new—and exuberant—twist. (2017)

Cullen, Lynn. *Little Scraggly Hair: A Dog on Noah's Ark.* Holiday House, 2003. When folks tell about Noah's ark, they usually claim no one believed in him. But that's not the whole story, because one scraggly-haired dog served Noah faithfully. Turns out long, long ago no one wanted a useless, dry-nosed, flea-carrying, cat-chasin' dog around – 'cept Noah. Noah and that dog weathered doubters, a teeming ark, and 40 days/40 nights of rain to find a happy ending near a warm fire. With a dialect as affecting as the story she tells, Lynn Cullen brings us an Americanized, 19th-century version of Noah's story told from Little Scraggly Hair's point of view. (2004)

Daly, Jude. *Sivu's Six Wishes.* Eerdmans Books, 2010. In a modern retelling of this ancient Taoist tale, Sivu is a simple stone mason, gifted at his craft, but bitter about his poverty and low station in life. He envies everyone whose wealth or influence exceeds his and he wishes to become them. Suddenly, mysteriously - and to his great surprise - his wish for transformation is granted, not once but six times! What a life! Intoxicated with his ascendancy, Sivu discovers neither contentment nor wisdom. Jude Daley gently reminds us, when wishes come true, we become vulnerable in ways we never expect. (2011)

Daly, Nikki. *Why the Sun and Moon Live in the Sky.* Lothrop. 1995. Sun is dazzled by Sea and impulsively invites her to his home. When Sea arrives, with "all her slippery, scaled and shelled children", Sun and Moon have nowhere to go but up. Daly's retelling of this Nigerian tale is lyrical and fluid--and tinged with sadness. Daly presents an altogether modern reflection on a well-known traditional tale. (1996)

Deedy, Carmen Agra. *The Rooster Who Would Not Be Quiet!* Illus. by Eugene Yelchin. Scholastic Press, 2017. In the town of

La Paz everyone sings with joy, until a newly elected mayor prohibits singing. When a spirited *gallito* arrives, he does what all roosters do; he sings! No matter the punishment, he will not be silenced, and repeatedly asks: *How can I keep from singing?* Rooster inspires the townspeople to sing out as well. A testament to the ineffable power of song and an implicit celebration of speaking truth to power. (2019)

Deedy, Carmen Agra, retell. *Martina, the Beautiful Cockroach: A Cuban Folktale.* Peachtree, 2007. "Finding husbands to choose from will be easy—picking the right one could be tricky," advises Martina's Abuela. A fresh and outrageously funny retelling of this humorous Cuban folktale about a young cockroach on the verge of marriage is flavored with Spanish words, sassy dialogue, and sage advice for prospective brides. (2009)

DeFelice, Cynthia and Mary DeMarsh. *Three Perfect Peaches.* Orchard, 1995. When a princess lies dying for want of three perfect peaches, a bevy of peach-laden suitors line up at the palace to vie for her affection. A delightful variant of an oft-told tale, this rendition is set apart by its robust humor and the satisfying denouement in which truth provides justice. (1996)

Del Negro, Janice. *Lucy Dove.* DK Publishing, 1998. Del Negro brings feminine changes to "The Sprightly Tailor" in this lively, atmospheric story of a superstitious Scottish laird and the old seamstress who takes up his challenge to complete his "lucky" trousers by moonlight in a haunted churchyard. Dismissed from the laird's service when her nimble fingers grow slow, Lucy Dove secures a pension as her reward for the lucky trousers. In language as nimble as Lucy's own fingers, Del Negro draws an audacious heroine who braves a monster for "a comfortable old age, in a cottage of her own, on her own piece of shore." (2000)

Demi. *The Empty Pot.* Holt, 1990. When the Emperor of China decides to choose his successor, he devises a way of determining the honesty of the children in his empire. Risking public humiliation and the possible wrath of the Emperor, little Ping is the only child to pass the test. New storytellers, especially children, will find this gem of a tale easy to learn and tell. (1992)

Derby, Sally. *Jacob and the Stranger.* Ticknor and Fields/Houghton Mifflin, 1994. Lackadaisical Jacob faithfully tends the miniature cats which blossom from a magical plant which a stranger has left in his care. When the stranger returns to claim his belongings, Jacob must use his wits to gain the price of his services and the companion of his heart. (1996)

Faulkner, Matt. *A Taste of Colored Water.* Simon & Schuster, 2008. History filtered through childhood innocence brings special poignancy to this compelling picture book account of segregation. When Abbey Finch comes back from town with tales of a fountain bubbling with "colored" water, Lulu and Jelly are sparked with curiosity and decide they must have a taste for themselves. Determined to find out what this water tastes like they are not prepared to encounter the realities of Jim Crow. Matt Faulkner has created a powerful teaching tool for telling and a wonderful picture book to share with anyone who wants "A Taste of Colored Water". (2009)

Fleming, Candace. *Clever Jack Takes the Cake.* Schwartz & Wade/Random, 2010. In this tasty tale, the ever-penniless-but-inventive Jack bakes a scrumptious cake from scratch as his birthday gift to a princess. On the way to the castle, he encounters greedy crows, a ravenous troll, a spooky forest, a dancing bear, and a palace guard; each gradually obliterates more of the cake. Undeterred by the cake's demise, Jack brings the best gift of all to the party -- an exciting story. Fleming delights us with onomatopoeic adjectives and an ebullient narrative as she delivers a terrific message about the power of storytelling. (2011)

Fox, Mem. *Hunwick's Egg.* Harcourt, 2005. All is not as it seems when Hunwick, a kindly old bandicoot, adopts a homeless egg. This minimalist tale reminds us that love overcomes expectations in unexpected ways. (2007)

Gershator, Phillis. *Zzzng! Zzzng! Zzzng! A Yoruba Tale.* Orchard Books, 1998. "In the days when all things came together to make the world as it is..." Mosquito set out to find someone to marry. Spurned first by Ear, then Arm, and then Leg, Mosquito

ultimately has her revenge. Another take on why mosquitoes buzz - and bite! - this is a rhythmic, repetitive, word-perfect retelling of a traditional Yoruba tale. Well-suited to the youngest of audiences and an excellent "story-stretcher" for audiences of any age, this really ZZZNGS! (2000)

Gerstein, Mordicai. *The Man Who Walked between the Towers*. Roaring Brook Press, 2003. Honored with the 2004 Caldecott Medal for stunning illustrations, Gerstein's writing is a splendid piece of storytelling. With the deceptive simplicity of classic fairytale language, he tells the story of Philippe Petit's daring wire walk between New York's Twin Towers in 1974. In recounting the young man's extraordinary achievement, the story celebrates the unquenchable human spirit. It also reminds us two towers once reached gracefully up into the sky. This astonishing, multi-layered story deserves to be heard. (2004)

Goble, Paul. *Love Flute*. Bradbury Press, 1992. Several sacred versions from Plains Indian cultures are woven together in this story which explains how the birds and animals gave the first love flute to a shy young man. Though he despaired of winning the woman he loved, in learning to echo the songs of the animals and then to create his own melodies, the young man touched and won the heart of his beloved. Simply told, yet wonderfully evocative, this story speaks of the power of music – a power beyond words which communicates both deeply and truly. (1994)

Haskins, James. *Delivering Justice: W. W. Law and the Fight for Civil Rights*. Candlewick, 2005. Law's grandmother's admonition to "Be somebody!" echoed throughout his life. This moving, picture book biography tells the story of a U.S. postal carrier in segregated Savannah, who delivered more than mail to citizens in the city he loved. Westley Wallace Law became a catalyst in the Great Savannah Boycott that brought equality through nonviolence three years before the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Law's story affirms that an "ordinary" person CAN "be somebody," profoundly and gracefully transforming a divided world. (2007)

Heiligman, Deborah. *The Boy Who Loved Math: The Improbable Life of Paul Erdős*. Roaring Brook Press, 2013. A picture book biography of idiosyncratic, Hungarian mathematician Paul Erdős may seem an unlikely place for an amusing, tellable tale. Yet, in chronicling Erdős's story, Heiligman presents mathematics as buoyant, collaborative, and inspirational – capturing a sense of fun for a subject many kids struggle with in school. Paul Erdős played with numbers and ideas from childhood throughout his life. He loved to announce his arrival with "My brain is open!"...*is ours? is yours?* (2015)

Henderson, Kathy. *Lugalbanda, The Boy Who Got Caught Up in a War*. Candlewick, 2006. Quite possibly the oldest written story in the world, Lugalbanda's tale resonates today. When Lugalbanda and his seven older brothers follow their king into battle, the goddess of love and war withholds her favor, dooming them to failure. Lugalbanda's kindness and courage become forces for peace. The author's lyrical and spare retelling of this long-lost epic from ancient Iraq is nothing short of breathtaking. (2007)

Henson, Heather. *That Book Woman*. Atheneum, 2008. Henson's spare and simple tale was "inspired by the true and courageous work of the Pack Horse Librarians...in the Appalachian mountains of Kentucky." Call it a poem, a story, or a monologue, this earnest first person account, with its rhythmic mountain vernacular, reads beautifully and will move all who take a love of books and reading for granted. (2009)

Kesey, Ken. *Little Tricker the Squirrel Meets Big Double the Bear*. Viking, 1990. When the biggest bear goes on a hungry rampage, only sassy Little Tricker the Squirrel outwits this formidable enemy. Kesey treats his audience, of any age, to a generous helping of sly, down-home humor, chock full of images that beg to be shared aloud. (1992)

Lepp, Bil. *The King of Little Things*. Illustrated by David T. Wenzel. Peachtree Publishers, 2013. King Normous, who wants to be "Ruler of All the World", gathers a vast army, invading and defeating one country after another. His last conquest is the King of Little Things. The king's numerous little subjects come to his rescue in hilarious ways—strings unstrung, hangers unhung, ticks and tocks left their clocks, lights unlit, scarves unknit. You'll never look at little things like pins, buttons, screws, etc. in quite the same way again! (2015)

Lyon, George Ella. *Which Side Are You On: The Story of a Song*. Illustrated by Christopher Cardinale. Cinco Puntos Press, 2011. As Florence Reese says: "This ain't easy, but sometimes you've got to take a stand." And she did. In Harlan County in 1931, while children dodged bullets meant for their father, Ma wrote an anthem that rallied coal miners to action. It still does! George Ella Lyon, resident of that same county in Kentucky, brings a brutal story to life through a child's eyes with humor and optimism. It is an important story and the "Author's Note" packs a wallop, reminding us the fight for workers' rights continues. *Hey, which side are YOU on?* (2013)

MacDonald, Margaret Read. *The Boy from the Dragon Palace*. Illustrated by Sachiko Yoshikawa. Albert Whitman and Company, 2011. This Japanese folktale contains enough slurping, snuffling and honking to keep children groaning and giggling with glee. When a poor flower seller gives his flowers to the Dragon King who lives beneath the sea, the Dragon King presents the flower seller with the gift of a snot-nosed little boy. The child brings great wealth to the flower seller, but the man's laziness and greed results in the loss of all his treasure. Margaret Read MacDonald gives us another highly tellable tale that addresses important issues – generosity, gratitude, and keeping your word – playfully! (2013)

MacDonald, Margaret Read. *Go to Sleep, Gecko!* August House, 2006. When fireflies disturb Gecko's sleep, he complains to Elephant and demands: "Do something about it!" But Elephant reminds Gecko (and us) of nature's delectable equations and the essential lesson that in life: "Some things you just have to put up with." (2007)

Maclear, Kyo. *The Good Little Book*. Illustrated by Marion Arbona. Tundra Books, 2015. A naughty boy, banished to the study to "think things over", reluctantly picks up a book not expecting much. The book dazzles him and stumps him; it makes him laugh and gasp; it becomes his special friend. When he loses it and then sees it in the hands of another child, he lets it go. A beautiful, touching book about the power of story in our lives. (2017)

Manley, Curtis. *The Crane Girl*. Illustrated by Lin Lang. Shen's Books/Lee & Low, 2017. Inspired by the beloved Japanese folktale *Crane Girl*, Curtis Manley shows once again how human greed squanders riches offered by the natural world and spiritual realms. Unlike stock characters of traditional folklore – embittered father, compassionate son, self-sacrificing maiden – Manley enriches his version with original haiku to reveal their interior lives. Choices change the lives of each, and ultimately love graces two of them. (2019)

Martin, Francesca. *Clever Tortoise*. Candlewick Press. 2000. This warm, orally infused retelling of an old story seems anything but old--fresh as new rain after drought time. Boastful Elephant starts the quarrel: "See how big I am? . . . I am stronger than all of you little animals!" And she starts trampling and spoiling the forest before Hippopotamus jumps right in, insisting she is the strongest. Clever Tortoise has other ideas, and soon the other small animals, working through "star time", help Clever Tortoise with his oh-so-clever plan to teach those two braggarts a lesson. The conversation rings true, the descriptions delight. In short, the author's mastery of African village storytelling will bring each storyteller and attendant listener right to the fire. (2002)

McCann, Michelle and Luba Trzysynska-Frederick. *Luba: the Angel of Bergen-Belsen*. Tricycle Press, 2004. Against the depravity and despair perpetrated by Nazis in concentration camps, stands one woman whose compassion and altruism moved others to help her care for fifty-four children in Bergen-Belsen. A story for older students and adults, segments of this aurally satisfying biography also can stand alone. The story "like the woman herself" attracts us through a modest, tender and confiding tone. Shattering ennui and cynicism, *then and now*, Luba bears witness to the fact that goodness is as contagious as fear. Pass it on! (2004)

McCaughrean, Geraldine. *Gilgamesh the Hero*. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2003. An epic as old as love, anger, fear and hope chronicles an unlikely friendship between Gilgamesh, a powerful king, and Enkidu, a wild man. Together, their bond defeats monsters and mythical beasts, while it infuriates goddesses and mortals alike. Danger hovers ever near, yet when death comes for Enkidu, the mighty king sinks into despair. Searching to resolve his anguish, Gilgamesh travels to the end of the

world and back again before he grasps that his happiness depends on his willingness to feel hope again. With dynamic and lyrical language, McCaughrean creates a tellable version of a classic tale. (2004)

McDermott, Gerald. *Zomo, the Rabbit*. Harcourt Brace, 1992. The clever, fleet-footed Zomo, an African cousin of Br'er Rabbit, is able to outsmart his more dangerous opponents to ultimately gain the wisdom he seeks from Sky God. Caldecott Award winner, Gerald McDermott takes a tale with many levels of subtle complexity and manages the remarkable feat of telling it in language so simple, streamlined and powerful that it will capture the imaginations of young and old alike. (1994)

McGill, Alice. *Way Up and Over Everything*. Houghton, 2008. A family story passed down by the author's great-great-grandmother tells of slaves yearning for freedom and the magical powers that enable them to escape and "disappear into thin air." Alice McGill remembers her great-grandmother sharing the story "as if unveiling a great, wonderful secret" and that she and her siblings long believed that certain Africans shared this gift of "taking to the air –way up and over everything." Alice McGill's book is a wonderful addition to a storyteller's repertoire. (2009)

McKissick, Patricia C. *Ol' Clip-Clop: A Ghost Story*. Illustrated by Eric Velasquez. Holiday House, 2013. On a chill October night, John Leep sets off on his horse to cruelly evict the Widow Mayes for failing to pay her rent. John Leep calls out to a horseman he hears following him - *Clip-Clop! Clip-Clop!* - but no rider appears. Though the Widow pays all she owes, John Leep hides one coin to cheat her. Frightened by the restless wind, Leep sets off for home haunted by sounds of an invisible horse and rider. Though John Leep reaches home and crawls into bed ... he is never seen again! This original tale was "inspired by a spooky tale told by the storytellers" in the author's family. *Clip-Clop!* (2015)

Mora, Oge. *Thank You, Omu!* Little, Brown and Co/Hachette Book Group, 2018. As the enticing aroma of Omu's simmering stew wafts throughout the neighborhood, a parade of neighbors knock on her door. Omu (pronounced AH-moo) graciously offers each visitor a serving of the delicious dish. Unfortunately, her generous nature leaves Omu without a meal; fortunately, another knock brings a veritable feast to her. The heartfelt appeal of sharing, along with a refrain for audience participation, makes *Thank You, Omu!* a tellable tale for all generations and all seasons. (2019)

Myers, Tim. *Tanuki's Gift: A Japanese Tale*. Marshall Cavendish, 2003. In contrast to the veneer of materialism, this quiet story plumbs the depths of the contemplative life and the priceless gift of friendship. A Buddhist priest opens his door to a tanuki, a small badger-like animal, one bitterly cold night. Over successive winters, they open their hearts to one another and their friendship grows. When the tanuki disappears to find three gold coins to repay the priest for his kindness, the priest discovers the true meaning of friendship. Though Myers' retelling offers a happier ending to an ancient Japanese "debt of gratitude" story, the core of the story remains undisturbed. The tale is so satisfying that after it's grasped, it immediately wants to be expressed. (2004)

Napoli, Donna Jo. *Mama Miti*. Simon and Schuster, 2010. Inspired by the stories of her elders in the highlands of Africa, Nobel Peace Prize recipient Wangari Maathai set Kenya on a path of recovery. As women came to her in desperation with problems rooted in Kenya's decimated landscape, Wangari gave them tree seedlings to plant. Each seedling was given with the blessing: "Thayu nyumba, Peace, my People". Millions of seedlings replenished both the land and its people. With rich cadences and repetition, this is an aurally satisfying story. Donna Jo Napoli shows how one woman brought extraordinary transformations to restore a ravaged earth: one act of kindness, one tree at a time. (2011)

Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux. *Bad News for Outlaws: the Remarkable Life of Bass Reeves, Deputy U.S. Marshal*. Carolrhoda, 2009. Bass Reeves, an estimable shot, always got his man! Born into slavery, this outstanding deputy marshal captured over 3,000 people during thirty-two years of service in the Oklahoma territory. Nelson brings an un-sung western hero to life in several vignettes that show why he earned the admiration of folks across the frontier - African Americans, European Americans, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans – for Reeves was as brave as he was honest. A story with true grit! (2011)

Paterson, Katherine. *The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks*. Lodestar, 1990. Newbery prize winning Paterson retells a Japanese tale with beautiful simplicity, weaving together complex elements—a double love story, an expression of the values that make love possible, and an understanding of the interconnected needs of animals and their human counterparts. (1992)

Paye, Won-Ldy and Margaret H. Lippert. *Mrs. Chicken and the Hungry Crocodile*. Henry Holt and Company, 2003. A slightly narcissistic chicken becomes the potential dinner of a crocodile. Using quick thinking and quicker wit, Mrs. Chicken's captor soon believes they are sisters and, therefore, Mrs. Chicken should not become dinner. This traditional Dan story from northeastern Liberia was passed down by Paye's grandmother, who trained him from childhood to be a storyteller. His short and colorful version serves as an excellent selection for first-time tellers and seasoned tellers alike. (2004)

Paye, Won-Ldy and Margaret H. Lippert. *Why Leopard Has Spots: Dan Stories From Liberia*. Raintree, 1998; Fulcrum Publishing, 1999. An intriguing collection of authentic "how-and-why" tales from the Dan peoples of the western African nation of Liberia. Wrought with humor, these seemingly nonsensical animal stories are literary treasure-troves, rich in the storytelling tradition that marks the foundation of Dan culture. Embedded with African folklore, each witty story provides both listeners and storytellers with universal values and lessons to live by. A comprehensive glossary and a storytellers' guide are welcome additions to this superb contribution to the rich legacy of the African storyteller. (2000)

Peacock, Shane. *The Artist and Me*. Owlkids Books, 2016. Inspired by events in the life of Vincent van Gogh, this lyrical picture book deftly explores themes of outsiders and rejection. The narrator reminisces about his childhood, when he and others mocked a peculiar man and his unique artistry; he also tells how, in time, he came to regret their bullying. At once poetic and powerful, the unassuming tale can be universally understood since van Gogh's name is never mentioned. Despite complex ideas, the lesson is simple and subtle. (2017)

Peet, Mal and Graham, Elspeth. *Mysterious Traveler*. Candlewick Press, 2013. Five riders on camels travel desperately through a vast, trackless desert into a ferocious sand storm. Elderly Issa, the desert mapped in his heart, uncovers the nearly buried treasure carried and protected by the sixth camel. This story of reunited siblings restoring balance to a disjointed world blooms, fresh as a desert flower, yet remarkably tinged with the feel of an ancient folktale. (2015)

Pelly, Kathleen T. *Magnus Maximus, A Marvelous Measurer*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2010. Magnus Maximus is a marvelous measurer; of that, everyone agrees. He measures and counts unexpected things, described in quirky language as fun for the teller or reader as it is for listeners. Magnus's shining moment comes when he saves his town from an escaped lion by startling it into being measured. When his glasses later get broken—crick, crack, crickle—a boy named Michael, a day at the beach, and "the foamy white crests of the waves and the snugness of a hand in a hand" help Magnus to the thoroughly satisfying realization of what he had been missing in his life. A marvelous (and very tellable) tale! (2011)

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Boycott Blues: How Rosa Parks Inspired a Nation*. Greenwillow, 2008. Andrea Davis Pinkney and her illustrator husband, Brian, have created a blues ballad that sings - and ultimately shouts - the joyous tale of the foot-weary seamstress and the people of Montgomery, Alabama who changed the world with their courage. *Boycott Blues* is a hymn to the power of shoes, determination and unremitting hope. (2009)

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down*. Little Brown and Company, 2010. Without overwhelming young listeners and without minimizing the ferocity directed against those who answered Dr. King's call to non-violent protest, Andrea Davis Pinkney serves up a satisfying helping of Civil Rights history. Pinkney achieves this synergy by celebrating the heroes, by focusing on their resolute strength, by seasoning events in delectable food metaphors and rhythmic language. Pinkney's recipe for racial equality is savory and, ultimately joyous. Dig in! Then feed the world. Time-line with suggested readings offers more food for thought. (2011)

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Sojourner Truth's Step-Stomp Stride*. Disney/Jump at the Sun Books, 2009. In a commanding biography of Sojourner Truth, Andrea Davis Pinkney tells a rhythmic tale of how bravery and determination can change the world. Isabella, who can work like a man, is denied freedom when the man who enslaved her breaks their agreement. But she will not be denied! After she escapes with help from Quakers, she chooses the name Sojourner Truth and leads others to freedom's door. Her physical strength is exceeded only by her perseverance, her intelligence and the earthshaking words with which she stomps on the lies of slavery and sings out the righteousness of freedom and women's rights. (2011)

Polacco, Patricia. *January's Sparrow*. Philomel Books, 2009. Throughout the impersonal arc of recorded history, dignity, suffering, and bravery always have names and faces. The enslaved Crosswhite family escaped to Marshall, Michigan in 1843. The community's activism in saving the family from recapture in 1847 is a story for our time. The story, itself, would have been forgotten had it not been held collectively for generations by Marshall's citizens and retold to Patricia Polacco. This is the transcendent power of the Oral Tradition: to preserve and bear witness to otherwise unrecorded historical events with nuanced truths of humanity's potential for grace and goodness in the face of inhuman suffering. These traits, which advance and deepen our humanity, bear the repeated tellings that preserve them in our collective memory and carry them, more securely than any technology, into the future. (2011)

Prose, Francine. *You Never Know: A Legend of The Lamed-Vavniks*. Greenwillow, 1998. According to ancient Jewish tradition, the Lamed-Vavniks are 36 righteous men who have God's ear, yet they maintain extremely modest lives within a community. Although important citizens pray when a deluge follows a drought in Plotchnik, the Rabbi realizes when Schmueel -- secretly called "poor stupid Schmueel" -- adds his prayer that the heavens respond to their pleas. Why? Told with disarming simplicity, gentle humor, and absolutely no moralizing, this legend imparts its message about tolerance with memorable sagacity and grace. (2000)

Rockliff, Mara. *The Grudge Keeper*. Peachtree Publishers, 2014. The people of Bonnyripple hold no grudges because they give all complaints, accusations and resentments to old Cornelius, the Grudge Keeper. Who is to say if it is unfortunate, or fortunate, when a great storm upends all the grudges? Rockliff's original folkloric story details the merry mayhem in the lives of the townspeople with rich, rhythmic language that begs to be told. (2015)

Salley, Coleen. *Epossumondas Plays Possum*. Houghton Mifflin/Harcourt, 2009. Warned by his mama to never go into the swamp, Epossumondas follows a butterfly in anyway. Soon lost, he learns that the best way to avoid the dangerous loup-garou is to play dead - as any good possum would. This tale is made for beginning tellers and pros alike. Epossumondas will warm your heart and make you yearn for sweet tea and sunshine! (2011)

Say, Allen. *The Kamishibai Man*. Houghton Mifflin, 2005. Amid the cacophony of a modern Japanese city, past and present fuse unexpectedly as a crowd of adults voice their joy at the return of their childhood storyteller, the Kamishibai man. With his "paper theater" and candies, the elderly storyteller tenderly bundles up the past making it a gift for the future. (2007)

Schlitz, Laura Amy, adapt. *The Bearskinner: A Tale of the Brothers Grimm*. Candlewick, 2007. A soldier returning from war strikes a bargain with the devil and must wander the world for seven years dressed only in a bear's skin. This "tale of the brothers Grimm" is enhanced by the measured tones and haunting images of Schlitz' powerful retelling. And, in an intriguing twist, it is the middle and not the youngest daughter who perceives the Bearskinner's true character and agrees to be his wife. A compelling and unforgettable celebration of the strength and endurance of the human spirit from the Newbery Award winning author of *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!* (2009)

Strauss, Linda Leopold. *The Elijah Door: A Passover Tale*. Illustrated by Alexi Natchev. Holiday House, 2012. A Romeo and Juliet tale set in a town which is "sometimes Poland and sometimes Russia". Once close, the Galinskys and the Lippas now feud, but their daughter and son want to marry. The betrothed couple brings their respective families together over the Passover table with help from the local rabbi and the town's people. The spirit of Elijah imbues the conclusion of the story with his power of

healing and reconciliation. Strauss' original story resounds with the sly humor and deep wisdom found throughout Yiddish folklore. (2013)

Tingle, Tim. *Crossing Bok Chitto: A Choctaw Tale of Friendship and Freedom*. Cinco Puntos Press, 2006. A compassionate and daring Choctaw girl in the early 1800's helps an enslaved boy and his family walk "on the water" to freedom. In telling the story of the friendship between Martha Tom and Little Mo, and in juxtaposing the cultures of freedom and bondage, Tingle affirms "the sweet and secret fire that drives the Indian heart". (2007)

Turk, Evan. *The Storyteller*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2016. In a drought-stricken city at the edge of the Sahara, a thirsty boy approaches a dried-up fountain where an elderly, forgotten storyteller sits. As the old man weaves his story within a story within a story, the enchanted boy finds his empty cup miraculously filling with cool water. When a sandstorm in the form of a ruthless djinn arrives, the boy retells the story Scheherazade-style to save the city from destruction. A multilayered ode to the potency of storytelling, providing water for the human spirit. (2017)

Van Dusen, Chris. *King Hugo's Huge Ego*. Candlewick, 2011. A satirical story tells of King Hugo, a self-aggrandizing, self-centered, insufferable, narcissistic, egomaniacal, pompous little man. In short, he loves everything about... *himself*. His subjects endure silly rules and suffer through his weekly "Speech of Adoration". When a chance encounter with a willful peasant maiden alters his majestic life forever, King Hugo pays dearly for his arrogance and bad manners. He finally learns better ways to govern his kingdom. This cautionary tale rolls along with rhythms and poetic language for the merriment of storytellers and their enchanted audiences. (2013)

Walsh, Jill Paton. *Matthew and the Sea Singer*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 1993. The orphan Matthew sings so beautifully birds stop their tunes to hear him and seals gather on rocks below the church to listen when he sings on Sundays. When Matthew goes missing, his friend Birdy realizes he's been stolen by the seal-folk. The seal queen's extraordinary powers are no match for the compassion, steadfastness and wit with which Birdy wins Matthew's return. Walsh's lilting language and deft description make her original tale a pleasure to hear. (1994)

Willey, Margaret. *Clever Beatrice and the Best Little Pony*. Simon and Schuster, 2004. Once again, Willey's retelling of a French-Canadian folktale features the wonderfully clever heroine Beatrice. Beatrice is determined to apprehend the mysterious intruder who sneaks into the barn and rides her beloved pony each night. Characters such as Monsieur Le Pain, a baker known to help with matters not easily explained, and the lutin, an elflike creature who is the culprit, lend an air of magic to the tale. This captivating story is a lilting tribute to the self-sufficiency and resourcefulness of one young girl. (2004)

Winter, Jonah. *Dizzy*. Arthur A. Levine/Scholastic, 2006. An abused and angry boy in a childhood of blue notes, John Birks Gillespie turns his life around when a teacher gives him a trumpet. Gillespie harnesses his unorthodox character, and penchant for being a joker, to earn the nickname "Dizzy." He breaks all the rules, becomes an influential musician and helps create *bebop*, characterized by a fast tempo, instrumental virtuosity and improvisation. Winter's writing mimics a trumpet's highs and lows. Bursting with energy, the rhythms of this story beg to be blown off the page. (2007)

Winter, Jonah. *You Never Heard of Willie Mays?!* Illustrated by Terry Widener. Schwartz & Wade, 2013. From the conversational tone of the title, an exuberant fan recounts the life of Willie Mays, legendary New York Giant's centerfielder. Mays' story begins with his dream in 1941 of "becoming the next Joe DiMaggio" and ends with his famous "Catch" in the '54 World Series. Jonah Winter's love of Mays and of the game shines throughout this tellable tale that will be enjoyed even by those who don't know a fastball from a slider. (2015)

Yolen, Jane. *Greyling*. Philomel Books, 1991. A lonely fisherman and his wife long for a child until the day they discover an orphaned seal pup who turns into a little baby boy even before he enters their cottage. This lyrical retelling by a master storyteller of a selkie story captures the haunting essence of an old Scottish tale. (1992)