

## Notable Books for Younger Readers 2015

by Chazda Albright -

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This entry is part 1 of 3 in the series [Awards](#)

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Every year, the [American Library Association \(ALA\)](#) decides on what books will be considered for the Newberry, the Caldecott, the Arbuthnot, the Carnegie Award, the Geisel, the Odyssey Award, the Silbert Medal and the Wilder Medal - to name a few.

They also recognize Notable Books each year, and acknowledge those by age group.

These are the 2015 Notable Book nominations for *Younger Readers* (pre-school through 7 years). I was very pleased to see that some of my favorite books of the year are on the list!

To find out more about the ALA and the Notable Book for Young Readers Award, visit [their official website](#).

[The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend.](#)

By [Dan Santat](#). Illus. by the author. [Little Brown](#).

In four delightful chapters, Beekle, an imaginary friend, undergoes an emotional journey looking for his human. Vibrant illustrations add to the fun. (2015 Caldecott Medal Book)

[The Baby Tree.](#)

By [Sophie Blackall](#). Illus. by the author. [Penguin/Nancy Paulsen Books](#).

Where do babies come from? This question is delicately handled in Blackall's gentle and charming book. After asking around with amusing results, a boy finally learns the true facts from his parents. With a page of tips for "the conversation."

### [Beautiful Moon: A Child's Prayer.](#)

By [Tonya Bolden](#). Illus. by [Eric Velasquez](#). [Abrams Books](#).

A gorgeous full moon shines on a young boy praying for the homeless, the hungry, those at war and his family. The stunning illustrations set a reverent tone that reflects the thoughtful and universal text.

### [Blizzard.](#)

By [John Rocco](#). Illus. by the author. [Disney-Hyperion](#) (Disney Book Group for kids).

A young boy's experience in a blizzard and the adventure of going to the market are vividly portrayed through Norman Rockwell-like illustrations that give personality to the child and the weather.

### [A Boy and a Jaguar.](#)

By [Alan Rabinowitz](#). Illus. by [CáTia Chien](#). [Houghton Mifflin Harcourt](#).

Alan Rabinowitz's story of feeling broken as a child yet experiencing great empathy for animals kept in cages at the zoo. He went on to become a zoologist and conservationist known around the world.

### [The Chicken Squad: The First Misadventure.](#)

By [Doreen Cronin](#). Illus. by [Kevin Cornell](#). [Simon & Schuster/Atheneum](#).

Tail, a scaredy-squirrel, seeks refuge and help from the Chicken Squad, four problem-solving chicks. This illustrated chapter book brings each chicken's zany personality to life.

### [A Dance Like Starlight: One Ballerina's Dream.](#)

By [Kristy Dempsey](#). Illus. by [Floyd Cooper](#). [Penguin/Philomel](#).

An inspirational message told in lyrical language about the power of dreams and one young girl's desire to dance. Soft colorful images support the poignant text.

[Dory Fantasmagory.](#)

By [Abby Hanlon](#). Illus. by the author. [Penguin/Dial](#).

In this charming take on family life, irrepressible Dory drives her siblings crazy with her wild imagination until she finally gets them to join in on the fun.

[Draw!](#)

By [Raúl Colón](#). Illus. by the author. [Simon & Schuster/Paula Wiseman](#).

Colón celebrates the power of imagination and creativity to heal a bedridden boy. The lush illustrations need no words as the boy goes on an artistic and exciting adventure.

[Early Bird.](#)

By [Toni Yuly](#). Illus. by the author. [Feiwel and Friends/Macmillan](#).

Early bird rises before the sun to find breakfast. He's tired after so much activity, so he and a surprising friend—early worm—enjoy what he's found.

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[The Farmer and the Clown.](#)

By [Marla Frazee](#). Illus. by the author. [Simon & Schuster\Beach Lane](#).

Muted browns and grays permeate the farmer's world until a small child falls off a circus train, bringing with him color and light. No words are needed in this quiet story of an unlikely friendship.

[The Farmer's Away! Baa! Neigh!](#)

By [Anne Vittur Kennedy](#). Illus. by the author. [Candlewick Press](#).

Energetic barnyard animals use rollicking nonsense words to amusingly bring the farm to life.

[Feathers: Not Just for Flying.](#)

By [Melissa Stewart](#). Illus. by [Sarah S. Brannen](#). [Charlesbridge](#).

Feathers fulfill a number of different purposes. Lovely watercolor paintings illustrate a variety of birds

and the many roles their feathers play.

### [Firebird.](#)

By [Misty Copeland](#). Illus. by [Christopher Myers](#). [Penguin/G.P. Putnam's](#).

Famed ballerina Misty Copeland encourages a young African-American girl to follow her dreams to be a prima ballerina in this poetic text vividly illustrated with evocative collages.

### [Firefly July: A Year of Very Short Poems.](#)

Selected by [Paul B. Janeczko](#). Illus. by [Melissa Sweet](#). [Candlewick](#).

The four seasons are explored in short poems from both famed and newer poets and enhanced by Sweet's exquisite illustrations.

### [Flashlight.](#)

By [Lizi Boyd](#). Illus. by the author. [Chronicle](#).

In mostly black and white illustrations, a young child with a flashlight discovers many of the mysteries and joys of the night, then suddenly the tables are turned. Cut outs add to the fun of this highly imaginative book.

### [Fox's Garden.](#)

By [Princesse Camcam](#). Illus. by the author. [Enchanted Lion Books](#).

A young boy's kindness to a fox and how that fox repays him are at the heart of this wordless book. Cut paper images in subtle tones bring warmth to a cold winter night.

### [Froodle.](#)

By [Antoinette Portis](#). Illus. by the author. [Roaring Brook/Neal Porter](#).

Brown Bird is tired of his song so he makes up new words. The other animals follow suit and the neighborhood is never the same.

### [Gaston.](#)

By [Kelly DiPucchio](#). Illus. by [Christian Robinson](#). [Simon & Schuster/Atheneum](#).

Gaston looks and acts different from his poodle sisters and a brief encounter in the park reveals the reason why. A lively and rhyming text is emphasized by the stylish illustrations.

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[Green Is a Chile Pepper.](#)

By [Roseanne Greenfield Thong](#). Illus. by [John Parra](#). [Chronicle Books](#).

This lively color-concept book presents a slice of Latino culture through food and fun. Vibrant folk art perfectly complements the text. (2015 Belpré Illustrator Honor Book)

[Handle with Care: An Unusual Butterfly Journey.](#)

By [Loree Griffin Burns](#). Photographs by [Ellen Harasimowicz](#). [Millbrook/Lerner](#).

In this handsome book with glorious photographs, children can follow the life cycle of a butterfly from a farm in Costa Rica to a live museum exhibit in the U. S.

[Have You Seen My Dragon?](#)

By [Steve Light](#). Illus. by the author. [Candlewick Press](#).

Join a little boy on a journey through the city in search of his dragon. Against a black-and-white background, colorful icons of city life help him on his adventure.

[Hi, Koo!: A Year of Seasons.](#)

By [Jon J. Muth](#). Illus. by the author. [Scholastic](#).

An exuberant journey through the alphabet with panda bear, Koo. This investigates the seasons through watercolor illustrations and haiku poems.

[The Iridescence of Birds: A Book about Henri Matisse.](#)

By [Patricia MacLachlan](#). Illus. by [Hadley Hooper](#). [Roaring Brook/Neal Porter](#).

Using only two evocative sentences, MacLachlan's gentle and engaging portrait supports Hooper's stunning visual homage to the boy who would become a famous painter.

[Little Melba and Her Big Trombone.](#)

By [Katheryn Russell-Brown](#). Illus. by [Frank Morrison](#). [Lee & Low](#).

A little known story of a self-taught prodigy and world-class trombone player, composer, and arranger whose music mirrors the black musical sounds of the 20th century.

[Little Roja Riding Hood.](#)

By [Susan Middleton Elya](#). Illus. by [Susan Guevara](#). [Penguin/G.P. Putnam's Sons](#).

This spin on the classic fairy tale provides glimpses into a contemporary Hispanic family. Guevara's illustrations are a visual treat full of suspense and humor. (2015 Belpré Illustrator Honor Book)

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[Mama Built a Little Nest.](#)

By [Jennifer Ward](#). Illus. by [Steve Jenkins](#). [Simon & Schuster/Beach Lane](#).

Lively couplets describe birds and the nests they build for their young, while beautiful cut-paper collages are a feast for children's natural curiosity.

[The Most Magnificent Thing.](#)

By [Ashley Spires](#). Illus. by the author. [Kids Can Press](#).

A little girl, with the help of her dog, tries to build a magnificent thing. But it is harder than expected! See how her persistence pays off.

[Mr. Putter & Tabby Turn the Page.](#)

By [Cynthia Rylant](#). Illus. by [Arthur Howard](#). [Houghton Mifflin Harcourt](#).

Mr. Putter and his cat Tabby are excited to participate in a library read-aloud program, but they are nervous when Mrs. Teaberry and her unpredictable dog Zeke want to join. (2015 Geisel Honor Book)

[My Teacher is a Monster! \(No, I am Not\).](#)

By [Peter Brown](#). Illus. by the author. [Little, Brown Book Group](#).

Bobby thinks his teacher is the worst...that is until he accidentally meets her in the park. This hilarious book will tickle the funny bones of children (and their monstrous teachers).

### [Nana in the City.](#)

By [Lauren Castillo](#). Illus. by the author. [Clarion](#).

The story of a young boy's visit to his grandmother, and the reassuring way she helps him to lose his fear and experience the loud, busy city in a new way. (2015 Caldecott Honor Book)

### [Naptime.](#)

By [Iris De Moüy](#). Illus. by the author. Tr. by [Shelley Tanaka](#). [Groundwood/House of Anansi](#).

When naptime arrives on the Savannah, a little girl knows just how to get all the grumpy animals to go to sleep. Colorful images, and the use of bold and black outlines help animals stand out on each page.

### [The Noisy Paint Box: The Colors and Sounds of Kandinsky's Abstract Art.](#)

By [Barb Rosenstock](#), Illus. by [Mary Grandpré](#). [Knopf/Random House](#).

The story of abstract artist Vasily Kandinsky, who experienced colors as sounds and sounds as colors and created work that was bold and groundbreaking. (2015 Caldecott Honor Book)

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### [The Pigeon Needs a Bath!](#)

By [Mo Willems](#). Illus. by the author. [Disney-Hyperion](#).

Pigeon returns--this time he needs a bath but has other things to do. When he is finally convinced, he won't get out of the tub. It's a pleasure to join pigeon in another of his wild adventures.

### [Queen Victoria's Bathing Machine.](#)

By [Gloria Whelan](#). Illus. by [Nancy Carpenter](#), [Simon & Schuster](#).

A playful rhyming text brings us to Victorian times and a queen who cannot be seen by her subjects when partaking of such an indelicate activity as swimming. Amusing illustrations partner well with the tone of

the book.

[Sam and Dave Dig a Hole.](#)

By [Mac Barnett](#). Illus. by [Jon Klassen](#). [Candlewick Press](#).

Two boys, accompanied by their dog, set out to dig a hole. Readers will find an unexpected treasure and be challenged to ponder the meaning of “spectacular.” (2015 Caldecott Honor Book)

[Shh! We Have a Plan.](#)

By [Chris Haughton](#). Illus. by the author. [Candlewick Press](#).

Four friends creep through the woods on a search for prey. Vibrant illustrations help tell the story of how even carefully laid plans can go awry.

[Star Stuff: Carl Sagan and the Mysteries of the Cosmos.](#)

By [Stephanie Roth Sisson](#). Illus. by the author. [Roaring Brook](#).

The simple text describes how Sagan’s childhood curiosity and persistence eventually lead to his involvement in the Voyager mission. Lively images and design reflect this notable life.

[Tap Tap Boom Boom.](#)

By [Elizabeth Bluemle](#). Illus. by [G. Brian Karas](#). [Candlewick Press](#).

When a spring storm pops up in New York City, lots of people seek refuge in the subway station. Dogs, children and adults young and old enjoy a brief moment of community that ends with a surprise in the sky.

[Telephone.](#)

By [Mac Barnett](#). Illus. by [Jen Corace](#). [Chronicle Books](#).

Clever page turns, hilarious details, and delightful wordplay abound in the bird world’s version of the classic game of telephone. Colorful illustrations give each bird’s personality its due.

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[Tiny Creatures: The World of Microbes.](#)

By [Nicola Davies](#), Illus. by [Emily Sutton](#). [Candlewick Press](#).

This straightforward narrative introduces young readers to microbes through simple descriptions, colorful examples, and concise writing. Watercolor images illustrate the examples and create a nostalgic feel.

[Viva Frida.](#)

By [Yuyi Morales](#). Illus. by the author. [Roaring Brook/Neal Porter](#).

Vibrant photographs and minimal, evocative text beautifully portray the unique imagination and creativity of iconic artist Frida Kahlo. (2015 Belpré Illustrator Medal Book & Caldecott Honor Book)

[Waiting Is Not Easy!](#)

By [Mo Willems](#). Illus. by the author. [Disney-Hyperion](#).

Piggie has a big surprise for Gerald, but does he have the patience to wait? As the day wears on, Piggie remains calm while Gerald experiences a roller coaster of emotions, anticipating his reward. As night falls, their patience pays off with a breathtaking conclusion. (2015 Geisel Honor Book)

[Water Rolls, Water Rises: El agua rueda, el agua sube.](#)

By [Pat Mora](#). Illus. by [Meilo So](#). Tr. by [Adriana Domínguez & Pat Mora](#). [Lee & Low/Children's Book Press](#).

In a series of short poems (in English and Spanish) partnered with dramatic illustrations, the power, beauty, and value of water are celebrated.

[Weeds Find a Way.](#)

By [Cindy Jenson-Elliott](#). Illus. by [Carolyn Fisher](#). [Simon & Schuster/Beach Lane](#).

These often overlooked plants take center stage in this touching tribute to weeds. Jenson-Elliott highlights weeds' resilience with a catchy text full of attention. Fisher uses mixed media and digital collage to create bold, vibrant illustrations.

[Winter Bees & Other Poems of the Cold.](#)

By [Joyce Sidman](#). Illus. by [Rick Allen](#). [Houghton Mifflin Harcourt](#).

A collection of 12 poems about northern tundra wildlife uses a variety of poetic structures and includes additional information on each creature. Vivid linoleum-cut illustrations.

[Work, An Occupational ABC.](#)

By [Kellen Hatanaka](#). illus. by the author. [House of Anansi/Groundwood](#).

This visually appealing look at some unusual careers opens readers eyes to possibilities for their futures.

[You Are \(Not\) Small.](#)

By [Anna Kang](#). Illus. by [Christopher Weyant](#). [Two Lions](#).

A heated debate quickly ensues when two furry creatures can't agree on who is big and who is small. Expressive illustrations and cleverly simple text come together to provide a humorous tale with an unexpected and satisfying conclusion. (2015 Geisel Medal Book)

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