WELCOME to the 2026 MISelf in Books List

MISelf in Books is an annual list of inclusive books for Michigan learners. The list was created by a committee of certified school librarians who are members of the Michigan Association of School Librarians (formerly Michigan Association for Media in Education). These recommendations are based on books that they see learners reading and enjoying in their libraries. The books have been published in the last two years and are selected with a focus on authenticity. The list includes books for all grade levels: PrePK-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, and 9-12. **The grade level suggestion is the best fit for independent reading.** Book descriptions were taken from the summaries provided by the publishers' websites.

Preschool - First Grade

Smiling Eyes by Linda Sue Park, PreK-1

A rhyming celebration of the diversity of human eyes, showcasing different shapes, colors, and expressions through the eyes of an enthusiastic child in a bustling city.

Super Nani and Captain Yaz by Saira Shah, PreK-1

When Yazmin's Nani visits from Pakistan for the first time, she realizes they speak two different languages. Through the power of creativity, and with the help of Yazmin's trusty superheroes and a new rag doll, Yazmin and Nani find there are ways for them to talk after all.

You Be Teacher by Karla Clark, PreK-1

A humorous and tender picture book about an exhausted teacher who playfully asks her students to take over her duties for the day, encouraging empathy for educators. Told in rhyming couplets, this book is accessible for any age, and the illustrations represent a multitude of ethnicities, as well as a variety of assistive technologies that could be seen in a diverse classroom.

Lower Elementary

100 Days by Kimberly Lee and Michelle Jing Chan, 2-3
Anya feels overlooked after her baby sister, Hana, is born. She learns to appreciate her new sibling through the lens of the Chinese tradition of celebrating a baby's 100th day, realizing that love and sisterhood grow over time through shared moments, traditions like ang ku kueh cakes, and the realization that a sibling can become a lifelong friend.

A-Ztec: a Bilingual Alphabet by Emmanuel Valtierra, 2-3
Glorious Aztec art and cultural nods while text in English and Spanish poetically connects the alphabet from A - Z this book is a joyful celebration in color and words! Very young children through adults will all find something to learn, experience, and celebrate in this alphabet book for all ages.

Aaniin: I See Your Light by Dawn Quigley and Nanibah Chacon, 2-3
This book introduces the seven main values of Ojibwe culture through the seven grandfather teachings. The illustrations support the text, providing whimsy and bright colors to support each of the values.

Alberto Salas Plays Paka Paka con la Papa by Sara Andrea Fajardo and Juana Martinez-Neal, 2-3
Peruvian scientist Alberto Salas, “the godfather of potatoes”, brings joy, curiosity, and fun to his very important, life-changing work.This beautifully illustrated biography won the 2026 Sibert Medal.

Angel Draws a Dinosaur by Pavonis Giron, 2-3
A young artist named Angel gets inspired to draw a dinosaur after a museum visit but struggles with perfectionism and frustration as he tries to capture the image in his head. His mothers help him find a way to piece together all of his "mistakes" into something new.

Apapacho Love: A Story About Hugs from the Heart by Cynthia Harmony and Erika Meza, 2-3
A Mexican-American girl looks for all the ways people give "apapachos" to show their love.

Braided Roots by Pasha Westbrook and Madelyn Goodnight, 2-3
A father tells his daughter of the history of their family over generations as he braids her hair in one long, thick, strong braid like he wears. This book is an ode to the love of parent and child, the warmth of a sweet memory between that parent and child.

Broken by X. Fang, 2-3
Mei Mei accidentally breaks her Ama's favorite mug, and runs away to hide, worried her grandmother will be angry with her. When she learns her grandmother has blamed Mimi the cat, who saw the whole thing, she is wracked with guilt until she confesses and receives her grandmother's forgiving hug.

Chopsticks Are by Chloe Ito Ward and Lynn Scurfield, 2-3
While chopsticks originated in Asia, they have since accompanied many Asian families and Asian foods across countries and continents and remain an integral part of daily life in many cultures. This fun and energetic picture book celebrates this versatile utensil and shares how they are used in a range of countries, including Japan, China, Taiwan, Cambodia, and the Philippines.

Dancing With Water by Gwendolyn Wallace and Tonya Engel, 2-3
Kit, a small nonbinary Black child, accompanies their grandfather as he digs wells around town to bring clean water to their community. Addresses the idea of environmental racism.

Emeka, Eat Egusi! by Candice Iloh and Bea Jackson, 2-3
This heartfelt picture book celebrates Nigerian home cooking and trying new things from the perspective of an autistic child.

Filo’s Butterflies by Litea Fuata and Myo Yim, 2-3
Filo, a young Samoan boy, gets nervous about performing his first siva fa'ataupati (Samoan slap dance) at his aunties' wedding, but finds courage with the help of his supportive family.

A Golden Eid by Hiba Noor Khan and Singgih Jadmiko, 2-3
Hafsa and her family have spotted a crescent moon in the sky and ended their long Ramadan fast. Now they are getting ready to spend Eid with their loved ones: decorating the house, donning fancy clothes, and preparing lots of delicious food, including halwa, Hafsa’s favorite sweet treat. But when her father begins giving the food away to all the neighbors, Hafsa is worried that there won’t be anything left for her!

A Good Hide by Karina Iceberg and Natasha Donovan, 2-3
In Alaska, fall marks moose season, and after the hunt, the community works together to transform the moose hide through a traditional tanning process. With humor and warmth, author Karina Iceberg and illustrator Natasha Donovan highlight the values of gratitude, teamwork, and shared cultural knowledge in an intertribal Native Alaskan community.

Gwei the Hungry Ghost by Emeline Lee and Basia Tran, 2-3
Gwei the hungry ghost eats and eats, but never feels full -- until his friendship with another ghost provides him with the nourishment he really needs.

Happy Songkran Day! The Thai New Year Celebration by Dow Phumiruk, 2-3
Tida, a young girl, is so excited to celebrate the Thai New Year that she fumbles some of the prep. Though she is devastated, her family reminds her that the whole point of this holiday is to wash away mistakes and begin again.

Hazel’s Best Day: A Story of Community, Accessibility, and Pride in Being Yourself by Adiba Nelson and DeAnn Wiley, 2-3
Hazel is excited for Disability Pride Parade Day and takes readers on a joyful journey through her city as she celebrates with her community. Along the way, the story highlights how accessible features like curb cuts, service animals, and inclusive playgrounds help make communities safer and more welcoming for everyone.

A Home on the Page by Kao Kalia Yang and Seo Kim, 2-3
Mean racist words on their mailbox set Nou on a journey of finding peace in the best way possible, which is different for each member of her family. Nou finds peace in writing and works through her hurt with her words. Soft and warm illustrations capture the heart of this story well.

I Got You by Derrick Barnes and Shamar Knight-Justice, 2-3
Rasheed, a young Black boy, tells the story of how his big brother Anthony guides him through childhood, teaching him life lessons and reassuring him of their unbreakable bond even as Anthony seeks independence with his friends, culminating in a heartwarming surprise ending about becoming a big brother.

I Hear the Snow, I Smell the Sea by Janice Milusich and Chris Raschka, 2-3
This main character is blind and the book shows her and her mother enjoying the seasons in very common and familiar ways. The use of all of her senses in the explanation of the highlights of the different seasons creates marvelous connections in both text and illustrations.

Jeong is Jeong by Jessica Yoon and Michelle Lee, 2-3
A young girl hears a Korean word from her grandmother and wants it translated. When her grandmother cannot give a precise definition, they continue to the park. As the girl does things that are normal in her day: helping strangers who dropped something, sharing her treats, and helping her baby brother, her grandmother explains that she has learned the spirit of that word and exemplified it well. Students who know two languages will love the spirit of this girl's understanding of a Korean word.

Ki Po Che Mini's Perfect Kite by Suhasini Gupta and Devika Oza, 2-3
During the Indian festival of Makar Sankranti, young Mini builds her own imperfect kite after her brother claims kite flying isn't for little girls. With his help, she learns to fly it and courageously challenges an aggressive rival kite to a battle in the sky. In doing so, Mini proves her skill and discovers that her homemade creation is truly her own perfect diamond.

Leo's Lobo by Melissa Cristina Marquez and Maria Gabiela Gama, 2-3
Leo is bummed to have not connected with a pet at the adoption center in his home town, but is thrilled to connect to a lobo at a market shop for adopting alebrijes. He knows it will be a lot to care for his new pet, but he is determined to prove he can be responsible. Stunning illustrations lift the reader magically throughout this lovely new pet story.

Little Big Man by Varian Johnson and Reggie Brown, 2-3
Elijah, a young Black boy, learns how to help his family and take on new responsibilities as a big brother to the new baby. A heartwarming story about family, growing up, and the balance between work and play.

Mami's Magic Words by Kiara Valdez and Richy Sánchez Ayala, 2-3
Karena is tasked in class to come up with the words that bring the most magic and make the most connections in her heart. She immediately loves this idea and decides to document her mother's words that are partly English, partly Spanish, and partly Dominican.

Maya's Big Question by Meena Harris and Marissa Valdez, 2-3
When Maya's class takes a trip to Washington, DC, and only visits monuments dedicated to men, Maya asks: "Where are all the women?" With help from a park ranger, Maya decides to celebrate the women in her community with a monument of their own.

Mustafa's Mithai by Sana Rafi and Nabi H. Ali, 2-3
Mustafa decides to have friends over for dinner and play, so that he can share delicacies that are meant for celebrations. Mithai are sweets, and a common way to celebrate special occasions for South Asian and Middle Eastern - especially Persian - families.

New Shoes for Leo by Lauren Agra Deedy and Susan Gal, 2-3
William, a young Cuban-American boy, is looking for spare shoes to send to his cousin Leo, who lives in Cuba. William is excited to help, and learns from his family that he and his cousin have more in common than he expected.

Nisha Knows Best by Maryann Jacob Macias and Maithili Joshi, 2-3
This tender family story acts as a reminder for kids and adults that there are many different ways to show love, and that when it comes to your body - and your boundaries - you always know best.

One Beaded Earring by Pat Lomondin Skene and Natalie Laurin, 2-3
Fascinated by a pair of her mother's beaded earrings, nine-year-old Delia wears them to school without permission and accidentally loses one down the bathroom drain. After learning they were a gift given to her mother declaring her Métis heritage, Delia learns about her Indigenous roots.

One Day in June by Tourmaline and Charlot Kristensen, 2-3
Marsha P. Johnson was a black trans activist who played an important role in the Stonewall riots that led to Pride Month. The illustrations are vibrant and colorful, depicting the good trouble that Marsha caused, and the aftermath of celebration.

Ours: A Story of Loss and Healing by Mandy Settembre and Fran Matsumoto, 2-3
A mixed race family preparing to welcome a new baby returns from the hospital without one. The grief that the parents and the young boy feel and the way they move forward is a light to guide others. Told with age-appropriate language and care, this story will be a balm to families coping with a similar loss.

Picking Tea with Baba by Xu Bin, Yu Yin, and Sha Chen, 2-3
A young boy and his family spend the day picking tea leaves in the mountains of China, highlighting themes of family, hard work, and nature, and offering a glimpse into Chinese culture and the origins of tea.

Popo the Xolo by Paloma Angelina Lopez and Abraham Matias, 2-3
This story, inspired by Indigenous Mexican beliefs, follows Nana and Popo on a journey through the nine levels of Mictlān, with Popo encouraging her along the way, and ends with her family celebrating her life and memory.

Precious by Carlos Aponte, 2-3
After a hurricane hits Puerto Rico and destroys parts of his neighborhood, Pedrito rescues a dog from the wreckage. But it's not long before Pedrito's new pet is reunited with her owner. Pedrito, missing the dog and his father who has moved to the US, finds comfort in his Papi's favorite song.

The Princess and the Grain of Rice by Tina Cho and Honee Jang, 2-3
This retelling of "The Princess and the Pea" mixes true figures from Korean history with the traditional fairy tale. Jeongsoon wants to become a princess so she can help the people of Korea; but before she can earn the title, she must pass the Princess Challenge by completing the Manners Test, the Wisdom Test, and of course, the Sleep Test.

A Ramadan Night by Nadine Presley and Asma Enayeh, 2-3
Through an evening full of sounds and sights and scents, Sami feels the celebration of community. He feels the connection and calm of prayer. He feels the delight of a late-night dessert. He feels the joy of generosity. He feels…a Ramadan night.

Ramadan Rain by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow and Aliaa Betawi, 2-3
Haneen and her mother are on the way to the masjid to celebrate Eid. On their way, her mother discusses the importance and meaning of the holiday, emphasizing care for others and the beauty of community.

Raven’s RIbbons by Tasha Spillett and Daniel Ramirez, 2-3
Raven is a young Cree boy who dreams of wearing a traditional ribbon skirt to a community Round Dance. When his grandmother lovingly sews him a custom rainbow skirt, she chooses acceptance over rigid protocol to honor his Two-Spirit identity.

The Remembering Candle by Alison Goldberg and Selina Alko, 2-3
A Jewish family lights a yahrzeit candle to remember their grandfather on the anniversary of his death, and for the 24 hours it burns, they remember him with stories, food, and games.

Ren’s Pencil by Bo Lu, 2-3
A young Asian girl immigrates to the United States and tries to find her place. In her new home, nothing feels familiar - until she discovers that she can use a pencil to draw connections between her two homes.

Rhea’s Rodeo by Laekan Zea Kemp and Raissa Figueroa, 2-3
Rhea is a competitive Mexican girl who loves rodeo day and winning, but learns about sportsmanship, teamwork, and the real meaning of triumph when her team doesn't win the trophy.

See Marcus Grow by Marcus Bridgewater and Reggie Brown, 2-3
A young Black boy learns life lessons about growth and care from his grandmother in her garden, drawing parallels between nurturing plants and raising children.

A Sky That Sings by Anita Sanchez, George Steele and Emily Mendoza, 2-3
A Sky That Sings follows Mia, a blind girl, as she takes her aunt on a bird-listening adventure through the park, teaching her how to identify birds by their unique songs and calls. Along the way, Mia shows that paying close attention to sound, nature, and other senses can reveal the beauty and wonder all around us.

A Song for Two Homes by Dr. Michael Datcher and Charly Palmer, 2-3
A child tries to deal with the separation of her homes after a divorce. Musical lyrics help ground the child and allow for the grief of this change to be bearable. Deep connections to the black community stem from her name, Auset, to her musical taste of Bob Marley and Sweet Honey in the Rock, and the strong illustrating style of Charly Palmer.

The Book of Candles: Eight Poems for Hanukkah by Laurel Snyder and Leanne Hatch, 2-3
This picture book showcases one Jewish family's celebration of Hanukkah, from the unpacking of the hanukkiah and dreidels to packing them away after eight nights. Each night has its own poem highlighting the family's observance that night - from a dinner with extended family, to a quiet night at home watching the candles go out, to lighting a "bananukkiah" at the side of the road after a flat tire - and a thought or fact about the celebration of Hanukkah.

The Hole by Lindsay Bonilla and Brizida Magro, 2-3
A child grieves the death of their brother Matty, which appears as a dark “hole” that follows them everywhere. With help from a friend, they enter the hole and express their sadness and anger. In the end, they begin to cope by sharing memories, showing that grief can ease but not fully disappear.

The Library in the Woods by Calvin Alexander Ramsey and R. Gregory Christie, 2-3
In 1959, Junior and his parents move from their failing farm to the city in North Carolina, where he is astounded to find a library serving Black children and finds books to read to his illiterate father.

The Man in Motion: How Rick Hansen’s World Tour Helped Break Down Barriers for People with Disabilities by Lorna Shultz Nicholson and Emma Fitzgerald, 2-3
Rick Hansen set out on his wheelchair to travel around the world and teach people about access and acceptance of people with disabilities. He traveled around the world as he wheeled 24,901 miles and raised awareness and donations to help others.

The Other Side of the Garden by Sili Recio, Elena Djome Lawrence, and Brianna McCarthy, 2-3
A young child returns with her mother over years to her grandmother's grave to remember her, her beloved garden, and her love. The way this child moves through the years shows a different way to connect with her grandmother without needing the physical garden where she spent so much time with her Abuela.

The Summer of the Bone Horses by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve and Steph Littlebird, 2-3
Eddie goes to visit Grandpa and Grandma High Elk on the Rosebud Reservation for the summer, and he is sad about being away from Mom and Dad for the first time. Thankfully, there's plenty of things to do with Grandma and Grandpa to help him forget his loneliness. But when Grandpa is hurt and the car won't start, it's up to Eddie to find a way to save him.

The Toy Plane by Cherise Harris, 2-3

Leonard has lost his grandmother, who was a pilot. He treasures a toy plane that reminds him of her, and when it is carried away by a bird, he embarks on a magical journey that helps him remember her and process his grief. The focus is not on the death itself, but on love, memories, healing, and finding comfort after losing someone.

This Is How We Talk: A Celebration of Disability and Connection by Jessica Slice, Caroline Cupp, and Kayla Harren, 2-3
People of many racial identities and ability levels are depicted in this book about the different forms of communication people use.

Together We Are Sunshine by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow and Raissa Figueroa, 2-3
In this heartwarming celebration of sisterhood, three girls explore the natural world and discover the harmony of being the littlest, middle, and oldest sister.

Troubled Waters by Carole Boston Weatherford and Bryan Collier, 2-3
This book describes the civil rights marches of Alabama in the mid-1960s from the perspective of the Alabama River. It is an empowering retelling of these events in an accessible way for young students.

Upside-Down Iftar by Maysa Odeh and Nadine Issa, 2-3
Malak can’t wait to help her grandmother make iftar for their family. But when they decide to make makloubeh, everyone has a favorite ingredient to add, and Malak isn’t sure how they’ll fit it all in! This iftar is sure to be one to remember!

Where They Gather by Teresa Rodrigues and Jamiel Law, 2-3
As a tree grows, so too does a strong and loving Black family over generations in this gorgeous and lyrical picture book spanning centuries of persistence and hope.

You Are the Land by Steph Littlebird, 2-3
Using nature metaphors, each person in a child’s life is described as a necessary and interconnected component of the Earth. A vivid ode to belonging within a family, within a community, and within the natural world.

Zamzam for Everyone: Sharing Water at Hajj by Razeena Omar Gutta and Bassent Dawoud, 2-3
Mariam and her family are making a pilgrimage of Hajj to Makkah. As she reflects on Islam's command to do good, share, and give thanks, she decides to share her zamzam - holy water from the city's special well - with others. In doing so, she meets people from all over the world and receives her own acts of kindness from others.

Upper Elementary

Almost Sunset by Wahab Algarmi, 4-8

"It's almost sunset, and Hassan has been dreaming about eating since the sun came up. The month of Ramadan has begun, and not eating until sundown intensifies his already busy days full of homework, soccer, and gaming. And since his teachers and friends at school barely understand Ramadan and its traditions, it's easier to just...not mention it." -HarperCollins

André: André Leon Talley—A Fabulously Fashionable Fairy Tale by Carole Boston Weatherford, Rob Sanders, and Lamont O'Neal, 4-5

Recipient of a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor, this picture book biography chronicles André Leon Talley's inspiring rise from the segregated South to the pinnacle of the fashion world. Through resilience and determination, he overcame discrimination and hardship to become a legendary style icon.

At Last She Stood: How Joey Guerrero Spied, Survived, and Fought for Freedom by Erin Entrada Kelly, 4-8

Filipina Joey Guerrero's life as a spy, a survivor of Hansen's disease, and an advocate for patients of Hansen's disease was almost lost to history when she died in the United States years later where she had to sell her Presidential Medal of Freedom and change her name to survive when faced with discrimination due to her race and medical history. Newberry medalist Erin Entrada Kelly brings Guerrero's story to life in this biography which features sidebars explaining moments in history, photographs, and other primary sources.

Confessions of a Mango by Kate Lumsden, 4-5

Confessions of a Mango follows Ruby Emmerson, a sixth grader with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia who feels overshadowed by her high-achieving twin brother at their competitive charter school. After anonymously sharing her struggles online as a "mango among lovebirds," Ruby discovers that many of her classmates are also dealing with challenges and self-doubt. Through her growing online community, she learns to advocate for herself and others while helping her school become more accepting of different kinds of learners.

Crumble by Meredith McDlaren and Andrea Bell, 4-5

Emily can magically bake emotions into food at her family's bakery. She breaks the rule against baking bad feelings after her aunt dies, creating a crumble that numbs her grief but makes everyone around her sick.

Don't Cause Trouble by Aree Chung, 4-8

Twelve-year-old Ming Lee hopes middle school will be the fresh start he needs. But stepping into school with the same bowl haircut his mom insists on giving him, and wearing the extra-discounted thrift shop clothes she buys him doesn't quite make for the first day of his dreams. Things only get worse when he's placed in an ESL class despite English being his first (and only) language. The journey ahead is full of awkward, painful, and downright embarrassing moments.

The Extraordinary Orbit of Alex Ramirez by Jasminne Paulino, 4-8

Alex is obsessed with space, and he wants to work for NASA someday. But his self-contained classroom is doing the same thing every day and reading books for kids way younger than him. He knows he can join the mainstream science class, the first step on the path to NASA, because he knows he is capable of extraordinary things.

Ghost in the Night by Tiffany D. Jackson, 4-8
Harmony loves two things: photography, and ghost tours. In the most haunted city in the US (Savannah, GA), she takes a photo of what might be a real ghost. With the help of two new friends, she realizes that the real ghost might be tied to a real unsolved crime.

Hafsa's Way by Aisha Saeed, 4-8
Hafsa has the ambition and drive to leave her rural Pakistani village and be a doctor. She scores a spot in a prestigious summer program for students with college goals, but her family can't afford it. Her sister's in-laws step in to pay for the program and house her while she attends the school. A field trip to the area zoo changes her perspective on many things, including how she can change the world.

Hail Mariam by Huda Al-Marashi, 4-5
Iraqi American Mariam Hassan transfers to a local Catholic school and before her first day her parents remind her that she might be the first Muslim her classmates have ever met. No big deal, right? Just represent an entire religion while making new friends, keeping up with schoolwork, and figuring out who she is.

Halfway to Somewhere by Jose Pimienta, 4-8
Ave, a nonbinary middle schooler, moves from Mexicali, Mexico to Kansas with their mom and younger brother after their parents' divorce. Leaving their father and older sister forces them to navigate a new country, language, and a divided family while exploring themes of identity, displacement, and assimilation.

A Hero’s Guide to Summer Vacation by Pablo Cartaya, 4-8
Gonzalo embarks on a road trip with his grandfather to help promote his grandfather's new book. Along the way, Gonzalo learns his grandfather's story as an immigrant in the US. This is a charming story about family and relationships that is accessible to a wide age range.

The Ink Witch by Seph Cherrywell, 4-8
A hilarious and affirming cozy fantasy about the adventures of a girl who discovers she is the descendant of a powerful witch coven.

Into the Rapids by Ann Braden, 4-5
When storm flooding cuts Addy’s remote mountain town off from the outside world, she must rely on her unlikely classmate Caleb to navigate the disaster and find a way to the survival camp she’s been eager to attend. Along the way, Addy faces her grief, reconsiders her assumptions about Caleb, and learns that survival—and life—isn’t something she has to face alone.

The Invisible Parade, Leigh Bardugo and John Picacio, 4-5
Grieving the loss of her grandfather during Día de Muertos, Cala encounters four mysterious horsemen—including Death—who help her face her fears and discover that the people we love remain with us in unseen ways. Blending magic with vibrant imagery, the book offers a gentle exploration of love, loss, healing, and hope.

Invisible: The (Sort Of) True Story of Me and My Hidden Disease by David Soren, 4-5
J.J. is a talented eight-year-old aspiring animator with a secret: he has Crohn’s disease. His invisible illness becomes all too real when Norm, a giant monster who only J.J. can see, manifests to make his life miserable. Together, J.J. and Norm must learn to coexist in this heartfelt and humorously illustrated story about resilience, acceptance, and learning to live with a chronic illness.

J vs. K by Jerry Craft and Kwame Alexander, 4-8
J and K are rivals vying for the same prize in the school's writing competition. One tells stories with words while the other tells with illustrations. Who will win? How will their rivalry change?

Kid X by Tracey Baptiste, 4-8
In this sequel to Kid 2.0, Coal continues to learn about his unique powers, his foster family, and his biological family. When mysterious beings appear to surveil his movements, Coal realizes he may not be the only one with his powers and needs help from unexpected sources. Coal's story involves medical ethics, research without consent, AI, and figuring out who you can trust.

Let's Get Together by Brandy Colbert, 4-8
When African American girls, Kenya Norwood and Liberty Perry, meet at age 12 and discover they were twins separated at a young age, they have to deal with a past that involves abandonment, foster care, and how to create a new family.

Miss Camper by Kat Fajardo, 4-5
Sue is excited to go to summer camp, even though her big sister is a counselor. She's excited to try new things with her school friends, but a few tiffs put that time in jeopardy. Sue struggles with the problems with her friends as well as making new friends.

My Abuela is a Bruja by Mayra Cuevas. 4-5
A little girl admires her abuela's "magic" and hopes she can make magic of her own.

The Nine Moons of Han Yu and Luli by Karina Yan Glaser, 4-8
Set in the dual timelines of 731 China and 1931 New York City, this novel follows eleven-year-olds Han Yu and Luli Lee who live simple, but happy existences with their families who both sell food for a living. When Han's parents come down with a deadly illness and Luli's parents learn they may be evicted from their home and business, both Han and Luli make brave journeys into the unknown to save their families.

Queso, Just in Time by Ernesto Cisneros, 4-8
Queso wishes he could spend time with his dad again. After whispering that wish one night under the light of the moon, Queso wakes up the next morning in 1985. With twelve-year-old Pancho—the kid who will grow up to be his dad.

Radiant by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, 4-5
As school begins in 1963, Cooper Dale wrestles with what it means to 'shine' for a Black girl in a predominantly white community near Pittsburgh. Set against the historic backdrop of the Birmingham church bombing, the Kennedy assassination, and Beatlemania, Radiant is a finely crafted novel in verse about race, class, faith, and finding your place in a loving family and a complicated world.

Sea of Lemon Trees: The Corrido of Roberto Alvarez by Maria Dolores Aguilla, 4-8
In 1931, 12-year-old Roberto Alvarez returns to school after break to find that all Mexican American students are to attend school in a renovated barn instead, with less resources, poor conditions and a single teacher. Based on true historical events and written in free verse, "A Sea of Lemon Trees" follows Roberto as he becomes the plaintiff in a desegregation case against his school district, the first successful desegregation case in the US.

Teacher of Nomad Land by Daniel Nayeri, 4-8
Babak and his little sister have just lost their father. On the treacherous journey they meet a Jewish boy, hiding from a Nazi spy. And suddenly, they are all in a race for survival. Against the backdrop of World War II comes an epic adventure in the faraway places.

The Treasure of Ocean Parkway by Sarvenaz Tash, 4-8
Twelve-year-old Thea, (Korean American) who lives in an apartment building in Brooklyn, finds a secret room in the back of her closet that contains her grandfather's old diaries, his strange carvings, and a clue to a hidden treasure. Thea turns to Roya and Amin, two podcasting sleuths in Thea's building, for help solving a cold case and finding the treasure.

The Trouble with Heroes by Kate Messner, 4-8
Thirteen year old Finn Connelly is struggling with grief and anger after the death of his father. After he vandalizes a cemetery, Finn is assigned to climb all 46 of the Adirondack High Peaks. Along the way, he gains some unlikely friends and begins to confront his emotions, rebuild relationships, and discover his own strength.

Vanished: Seven Women Magicians Who Simply Disappeared by Anna Hays and Mary Kate McDevitt, 4-8
During the Golden Age of Magic from 1860 to 1930, seven women magicians in America defied Victorian conventions and created a unique place in history for themselves and future performers to come...During a time when women were typically confined to the home, these trailblazers crossed oceans on steamships and traveled the globe bringing their imaginative brand of magic to audiences around the world...For decades their stories were hidden, or overshadowed by male counterparts, but now they've come to life in this vibrant and captivating book.

Vanya and the Wild Hunt by Sangu Mandanna, 4-8
Eleven-year-old Vanya Vallen has always felt like she doesn't fit in. She's British-Indian in a mostly white town in England, her parents won't talk about their pasts, and she has ADHD. Overnight, she's whisked off to the enchanted library and school of Auramere, where she joins the ranks of archwitches and archivists.

Wanda Hears the Stars: A Blind Astronomer Listens to the Universe by Amy Hansen, Wanda Diaz Merced, and Rocio Arreola Mendoza, 4-5
Wanda Diaz Merced is a Puerto Rican woman who dreamed of being an astronomer as a child. After losing her eyesight to diabetes, Wanda still found a way to fulfill her dream.

Where Only Storms Grow by Alyssa Colman, 4-8
Despite the scoliosis that causes Joanna Stanton near-constant pain, she isn't ready to give up like her brother. But when Daddy leaves the family behind to find work in California, saving the farm from ruin falls on Howe's unwilling and Joanna's uneven shoulders.

Wish I Was a Baller by Amar Shah and Rashad Doucet, 4-8
Amar is trying to survive high school, crushes, homework, and bullies at school, all while starting a career as a sports journalist. Not every teenager gets to hang with Shaq, interview Michael Jordan, and be on the cover of Sports Illustrated Kids - but sports writer Amar Shah lived it all!

Xolo: How One Good Dog Saved Mankind by Donna Barba Higuera and Mariana Ruiz Johnson, 4-8
This graphic novel reimagining of Aztec creation mythology tells the story of Quetzalcoatl's lesser-known twin brother Xolotl whose bravery helps establish humanity on earth and dogs' role as man's best friend.

Yasi and Mina's Pomegranate Tree by Nikoo Yahyazade and Serineh Eliasian, 4-5

Yasi and her best friend Mina love playing under the pomegranate tree in the courtyard of their apartment building in Tehran. When the air sirens start howling, the girls rush to their homes to safety. Yasi doesn’t understand the war with Iraq, but she knows it isn’t good. The girls reunite in the morning, but Yasi lets her friend know her family has decided to move to the United States. Mina wishes they could go too. When the girls part, Mina gives Yasi a special gift to help her remember their friendship, their tree, and Tehran.

You're Out of Luck Alina Butt by Ambreen Butt-Hussain, 4-5

Alina Butt is excited for the start of the new school year, especially the class trip to Paris. But when her passport doesn't reach her in time for the Paris trip, her family decides instead to head to their homeland of Pakistan, where Alina learns more about her family history and gets closer to her family. She brings some of these teachings home to share with her classmates.

Middle School

Almost Sunset by Wahab Algarmi, 4-8

It's almost sunset, and Hassan has been dreaming about eating since the sun came up. Ramadan has begun, and not eating until sundown intensifies his already busy days full of homework, soccer, and gaming. And since his teachers and friends at school barely understand Ramadan and its traditions, it's easier to just...not mention it.

As You Wish by Nashae Jones, 6-8

Before 8th grade is over, Birdie intends to have a boyfriend and help her best friend Deve find a girlfriend. It takes a bit of interference from Anansi, the trickster spider god from Ghana, before Birdie realizes she should be careful what she wishes for because she and Deve may belong together.

At Last She Stood: How Joey Guerrero Spied, Survived, and Fought for Freedom by Erin Entrada Kelly, 4-8

Filipina Joey Guerrero's life as a spy and a survivor of Hansen's disease was almost lost to history when she died. After being recognized as a WWII hero with a Presidential Medal of Honor, she had to change her name when faced with discrimination due to her race and medical history. This biography brings Guerrero’s story to life with photographs, sidebars providing context, and primary source materials.

D.J. Rosenblum Becomes the G.O.A.T. by Abby White, 6-8

Ever since D.J.'s cousin died, her family has been a mess and it feels like they're not getting any better. D.J. is determined to find out what happened to her cousin in the last few days of her life, so she enlists the help of a nerdy journalist and popular hacker to help solve the mystery and put her family back together.

Don't Cause Trouble by Arree Chung, 4-8

Twelve-year-old Ming Lee hopes middle school will be the fresh start he needs. But stepping into school with the same bowl haircut his mom insists on giving him, and wearing the extra-discounted thrift shop clothes she buys him doesn't quite make for the first day of his dreams. Things only get worse when he’s placed in an ESL class despite English being his first (and only) language. The journey ahead is full of awkward, painful, and downright embarrassing moments.

Dropping Beats by Nathanael Lessore, 6-12

Thirteen-year-old Growls (aka Shaun) is an aspiring (awful) rapper who hopes to enter this year’s Raptology competition with his best friend, Shanks (aka Zachariah). After all, what better way to land his crush and get the respect he finally deserves than winning the contest and going viral? But when a livestream goes epically wrong, the two friends do go viral - but not in the way they’d hoped.

Every Borrowed Beat by Erin Stewart, 6-12

Sydney admits she's lucky to have gotten a new heart and survived. But how is she supposed to move forward with her own life (and potential new love) when she can't stop thinking about her donor, her best friend is still waiting for her own new heart, and her new friend is still grieving his own loss?

The Extraordinary Orbit of Alex Ramirez by Jasminne Paulino, 4-8

Alex is obsessed with space, and he wants to work for NASA someday. But his self-contained classroom is doing the exact same thing every day and reading books for kids way younger than him. He knows he can join the mainstream science class, the first step on the path to NASA, because he knows he is capable of extraordinary things.

Flip by Ngozi Ukazu, 6-12
After a disastrous prom-posal, Chi-chi Ekeh switches bodies with her crush, Flip Henderson. They learn to experience the world from the other's perspective, from dealing with microaggressions to learning to swim.

Ghost in the Night by Tiffany D. Jackson, 4-8
Harmony loves two things: photography, and ghost tours. In the most haunted city in the US (Savannah, GA), she takes a photo of what might be a real ghost. With the help of two new friends, she realizes that the real ghost might be tied to a real unsolved crime.

Hafsa's Way by Aisha Saeed, 4-8
Hafsa has the ambition and drive to leave her rural Pakistani village and be a doctor. She scores a spot in a prestigious summer program, but her family can't afford it. Her sister's in-laws step in to pay for the program and house her while she attends the school. A field trip to the area zoo changes her perspective on many things, including how she can change the world.

Halfway to Somewhere by Jose Pimienta, 4-8
Ave, a nonbinary middle schooler, moves from Mexicali, Mexico to Kansas with their mom and younger brother after their parents' divorce. Leaving their father and older sister forces them to navigate a new country, language, and a divided family while exploring themes of identity, displacement, and assimilation.

Heiress of Nowhere by Stacey Lee, 6-12
Lucy Nowhere has spent her whole life working on the vast estate of the eccentric shipbuilder who took her in after she washed ashore in a green canoe as a baby. When she discovers his severed head, she has to find the murderer before she becomes the primary suspect - or before she becomes the next victim.

A Hero’s Guide to Summer Vacation by Pablo Cartaya, 4-8
Gonzalo embarks on a road trip with his grandfather to help promote his grandfather's new book. Along the way, Gonzalo learns his grandfather's story as an immigrant in the US. This is a charming story about family and relationships that is accessible to a wide age range.

Hunger's Bite by Robin Taylor, 6-12
Friends Neeta and Emery have grown up together on the ship the Lark. But when a new owner and a suspicious passenger embark on the most recent trip, they have to figure out how to save themselves and their friendship.

The Ink Witch by Steph Cherrywell, 4-8
A hilarious and affirming cozy fantasy about the adventures of a girl who discovers she is the descendant of a powerful witch coven.

J vs. K by Jerry Craft and Kwame Alexander, 4-8
J and K are rivals vying for the same prize in the school's writing competition. One tells stories with words while the other tells with illustrations. Who will win? How will their rivalry change?

Kid X by Tracey Baptiste, 4-8
In this sequel to Kid 2.0, Coal continues to learn about his unique powers, his foster family, and his biological family. When mysterious beings appear to surveil his movements, Coal realizes he may not be the only one with his powers and he needs help from unexpected sources. Coal's story involves medical ethics, research without consent, AI, and figuring out who you can trust.

King of the Neuroverse by Idris Goodwin, 6-12
For the third summer in a row, Pernell is back in the classroom, facing the same struggles that have always made school seem more like a battlefield than a place of learning. This summer is different, though: he's battling to become the Cypher King, leader of the lunchroom's impromptu rap circles...In a world where the systems are turned against kids like him, Pernell needs to find a way to succeed with his ADHD, rather than in spite of it.

Let's Get Together by Brandy Colbert, 4-8
When Kenya Norwood and Liberty Perry meet at age 12 and discover they were twins separated at a young age, they have to deal with a past that involves abandonment, foster care, and how to create a new family.

Light in the Canyon by Darren Cools, 6-12
A year after her mother's death, Halley is still struggling with grief when a mysterious explosion during one of her uncle's scientific experiments causes her to disappear. As lonely Jamie and neighborhood librarian Raina become caught up in the aftermath, they join Halley's father in unraveling a mystery that leads to a long-forgotten farmhouse and a tragedy from the past. Together, they discover that the explosion may have connected their lives in ways they never imagined.

Listen to the Girls by Chrystal D. Giles, 6-8
When Calla finds out her favorite teacher has been accused of inappropriate conduct, she decides to take action in this powerful story about growing up and speaking up, about listening to others and learning to listen to yourself. The more that Calla listens, the more she realizes that maybe she has something to say too.

Ms. Marvel: Remnants of the Past by Saadia Faruqi, 6-8
Between getting an A in physics, trying not to fight with her obnoxious older brother, and fighting crime as Ms. Marvel, Kamala Khan keeps pretty busy. When a pair of mysterious and magical spectacles with Pakistani origins are stolen, Kamala needs to figure out who has them and why someone keeps stealing Desi artifacts. Her journey takes her all the way to Lahore, where she learns about her own heritage, and how the world isn't always full of good guys and bad guys - there are a lot of things in the middle too.

The Nine Moons of Han Yu and Luli by Karina Yan Glaser, 4-8
Set in both 731 China and 1931 New York City, this novel follows eleven-year-olds Han Yu and Luli Lee who live simple, but happy existences with their families. When Han's parents come down with a deadly illness and Luli's parents learn they may be evicted from their home and business, both Han and Luli make brave journeys into the unknown to save their families.

No Purchase Necessary by Maria Marianayagam, 6-8
When Jacob asks him to steal a Mercury bar from the convenience store, Ajay feels this is his chance to finally "get cool" and stop eating alone. When Jacob rejects the stolen chocolate bar, Ajay unwraps it and discovers it contains Mercury's Twenty-fifth Anniversary Grand Prize…one million dollars. Faced with an extreme dilemma, Ajay will have to bear the weight of his actions and battle his morality in deciding whether to claim the prize that may change the life of his family forever.

One Word, Six Letters by Adib Khorram, 6-12
Dayton and Farshid couldn't be more different. When Dayton acts on a dare and shouts a slur during a school-wide assembly, both boys are forced to grapple with the ripple effects and come to terms with who they are and whether they have the courage to defy societal expectations.

Ours to Tell: Reclaiming Indigenous Stories by Eldon Yellowhorn and Kathy Lowinger, 6-12
For too long, stories and art from Indigenous people have been written and recorded by others, not by the individuals who experienced the events. In Ours to Tell, sixteen Indigenous creators relate traditions, accounts of historical events, and their own lived experiences.

Please Pay Attention by Jamie Sumner, 6-8
There is a Before and an After for sixth grader Bea Coughlin. Before the shooting at her school that took the lives of her classmates and teacher and After, when she must figure out how to grieve, live, and keep rolling forward. But as her community rallies in a tidal wave of marches and speeches and protests, Bea can't get past the helplessness she felt in her wheelchair as others around her took cover.

Queso, Just in Time by Ernesto Cisnero, 4-8
Queso wishes he could spend time with his dad again. After whispering that wish one night under the light of the moon, Queso wakes up the next morning in 1985. With twelve-year-old Pancho—the kid who will grow up to be his dad.

Ramin Abbas Has Major Questions, 6-12
Ramin Abbas has spent his whole life obeying his parents, his Imam, and of course, Allah, without question. But when he starts crushing on the handsome captain of the soccer team, so many things he'd always been so sure about are becoming questions.

Saving Wolfgang by Gregor Craigie, 6-8
When Wolfgang's father dies, he and his mother go to live with his grandfather and everything changes. Wolfie is at a new school, and his mom and grandfather are really struggling. No one ever told Wolfie how his father died, so when he overhears that his father died by suicide, he has more questions and even more weight to bear.

A Scar Like a River by Lisa Graff, 6-8
Fallon Little has a secret—and it's not how she got the enormous scar that divides her face in two. Thirteen-year-old Fallon has only ever told one person what really happened on the day she got her scar, but when secrets even worse than the one about her scars come to light, she may not have the strength to keep them buried.

Sea of Lemon Trees: The Corrido of Roberto Alvarez by Dolores Maria Aguila, 4-8
In 1931, 12-year-old Roberto Alvarez returns to school after break to find that all Mexican American students are to attend school in a renovated barn instead, with less resources, poor conditions and a single teacher. Based on true historical events and written in free verse, this book follows Roberto as he becomes the plaintiff in a desegregation case against his school district, the first successful desegregation case in the US.

Some of Us are Brave by Saadia Faruqi, 6-8
Three kids are thrown together during Hurricane Harvey. They learn to see past their differences while working together to survive dangerous flooding.

Steam by Shaenon K. Garrity, illustrated by Emily Holden, 6-12
A genius humanoid escapes the university lab where she was made and gets a job at a local coffee shop in this graphic novel. Her new mission is to help her found family find happiness, before she gets caught in the real world.

The Teacher of Nomad Land by Daniel Nayeri, 4-8
Babak and his little sister have just lost their father. On their yearly trek across the mountains, they meet a Jewish boy, hiding from a Nazi spy. And suddenly, they are all in a race for survival.

The Treasure of Ocean Parkway by Tash Sarvenaz Tash, 4-8
Twelve-year-old Thea, finds a secret room in the back of her closet that contains her grandfather's old diaries, his strange carvings, and a clue to a hidden treasure. Thea turns to Roya and Amin, two podcasting sleuths in Thea's building, for help solving a cold case and finding the treasure.

The Trouble with Heroes by Kate Messner, 4-8
Thirteen year old Finn Connelly is struggling with grief and anger after the death of his father. After he vandalizes a cemetery, Finn is assigned to climb all 46 of the Adirondack High Peaks. Along the way, he gains some unlikely friends and begins to confront his emotions, rebuild relationships, and discover his own strength.

Top Heavy by Rhonda DeChambeau, 6-12
Esme has worked for years to be a dancer. It's all she's ever wanted. When she secures a spot with an elite dance team, she faces ridicule from the other dancers for her large chest, then is assaulted while out with her friend. She explores reduction surgery and struggles with the emotions related to her body struggles.

Vanished: Seven Women Magicians Who Simply Disappeared by Anna Hays, illustrated by Mary Kate McDevitt, 4-8
During the Golden Age of Magic from 1860 to 1930, seven women magicians in America defied Victorian conventions and created a unique place in history for themselves and future performers. During a time when women were typically confined to the home, these trailblazers traveled the globe bringing their imaginative brand of magic to audiences around the world. For decades their stories were hidden, or overshadowed by male counterparts, but now they've come to life.

Vanya and the Wild Hunt by Sangu Mandanna, 4-8
Eleven-year-old Vanya Vallen has always felt like she doesn't fit in. She's British-Indian in a mostly white town in England, her parents won't talk about their pasts, and she has ADHD. Overnight, she's whisked off to the enchanted library and school of Auramere, where she joins the ranks of archwitches and archivists.

Whale Eyes: A Memoir about Seeing and Being Seen by James Robinson, illustrated by Brian Rea, 6-12
Told through an experimental mix of intimate anecdotes and interactive visuals, this book immerses readers in James's experiences growing up with strabismus, allowing them to see the world through one eye at a time. With poignant illustrations, James's story equips readers of all ages with the tools to confront their discomfort with disability and turn confused, blank stares into powerful connections.

When It's Your Turn for Midnight by Blessing Musariri, 6-12
When fifteen-year-old Chianti learns that her dad isn't her biological father, her family splinters. Chianti goes to stay with her maternal grandmother, Ambuya, an eccentric and formidable ex-freedom fighter in Zimbabwe's civil war. As she wrestles with the ghosts of her grandmother's friend's past as well her own, she realizes that time is slippery, that family isn't defined by blood, and that it's never too late for a transformation.

When Tomorrow Burns by Tae Keller, 6-8
When best friends Nomi, Vi, and Arthur were younger, they discovered a book of prophecies. As the prophecy escalates, past and present intersect, fate and friendship collide, and secrets spread like wildfire. Together, Nomi, Vi, and Arthur must face the future…even when it's uncertain.

When You’re Brave Enough by Rebecca Bendheim, 6-8

Lacey and Grace have been best friends for their whole lives, but when Lacey moves to a new state, she's excited to make new friends, do the school musical, and have her first kiss. However, her new school has a weird tradition - the two leads always have a real kiss on closing night. Lacey - already struggling with the chaos of the move - isn't sure if she's brave enough to be her real self.

Where Only Storms Grow by Alyssa Colman, 4-8

The Stanton twins used to be close, but it’s been 4 years since rain fell, and their bond dried up like dust. Howe Stanton is ready to give up on their farm, but Joanna keeps trying, despite the scoliosis that causes her near-constant pain, she isn’t ready to give up like her brother. But when Daddy leaves the family behind to find work in California, saving the farm from ruin falls on Howe’s unwilling and Joanna’s uneven shoulders.

Wish I Was a Baller by Amar Shah, illustrated by Rashad Doucet, 4-8

Amar is trying to survive high school, crushes, homework, and bullies at school, all while starting a career as a sports journalist. Not every teenager gets to hang with Shaq, interview Michael Jordan, and be on the cover of Sports Illustrated Kids - but sports writer Amar Shah lived it all!

Xolo: How One Good Dog Saved Mankind by Donna Barba Higuera and Mariana Ruiz Johnson, 4-8

This graphic novel reimagining of Aztec creation mythology tells the story of Quetzalcoatl's lesser-known twin brother Xolotl whose bravery helps establish humanity on earth and dogs' role as man's best friend.

A Year Without a Home by V.T Bidania, 6-8

After U.S. troops pull out of Vietnam, eleven-year-old Gao Sheng and her family are forced to flee their home in Laos and make a new home in a refugee camp in Thailand.

High School

According to Plan by Christen Randall, 9-12

Mal, a neurodivergent nonbinary teen, has a plan to get to college and out of their small town, but that plan begins to unravel when their school's literary magazine is cancelled. Mal teams up with Emerson and a group of peers to create an underground zine. Along the way, they discover friendship, queer community, and the courage to rethink the rigid “plan” they once depended on.

All the Noise at Once by DeAndra Davis, 9-12

Aiden, a Black autistic 16-year old, just wants to play football with his older brother. A fight that leads to his brother getting arrested changes everything. Aiden is determined to prove his brother is being treated unfairly.

Armaveni by Nadine Takvorian, 9-12

A bold, autobiographical graphic novel chronicling one girl’s quest to uncover her family’s history during the Armenian genocide.

Bad Kid: My Life as a "Troubled Teen" by Sofia Szamosi, 9-12

This graphic memoir is about Sofia, who was 13 years old when two strangers took her from her home in the middle of the night. Her mom and her new stepfather had enrolled her in a program for troubled teens. Rather than rehabilitate Sofia, her experiences over the next two years in the troubled teen industry were traumatic and led to further problems.

Better the Devil by Erik J. Brown, 9-12

Desperate to escape his abusive parents' attempt to force him into conversion therapy, a gay teenager runs away from home and is forced to survive on his own. To avoid being sent back to his parents, he steals the identity of a boy who went missing a decade prior and infiltrates his wealthy family. Once there, he quickly realizes that someone knows he's an impostor, forcing him to team up with a true-crime-obsessed neighbor to uncover what really happened to the missing boy before he becomes the next victim.

Breakout by Dhonielle Clayton, Tiffany D. Jackson, Nic Stone, Angle Thomas, Ashley Woodfolk, Nicole Yoon, 9-12

A group of elite teens think they're heading off for a luxurious spring break at a resort off the coast of Florida - but when a hurricane blows through and the power is cut, secrets start being revealed. Their trip unravels quickly, and they may not all leave the island alive...

The Corruption of Hollis Brown by K Ancrum, 9-12

A queer supernatural thriller about a struggling teenager trapped in a hopeless and decaying small town who makes a deal with a mysterious spirit named Walt. After Walt takes possession of his body to settle unfinished business, the two develop an intense bond that forces Hollis to confront his own trauma as well as the cost of escaping the life that has defined him.

Dropping Beats by Nathanael Lessore, 6-12

Thirteen-year-old Growls (aka Shaun) is an aspiring (awful) rapper who hopes to enter this year’s Raptology competition with his best friend, Shanks (aka Zachariah). After all, what better way to land his crush (Tanisha) and get the respect he finally deserves than winning the contest and going viral? But when a livestream practice goes epically wrong, the two friends do go viral– and not in the way they’d hoped.

Estela, Undrowning by René Peña-Govea, 9-12
Estela Morales is one of only a few Latinx students at her exclusive high school, and she just wants to spend her senior year making sure she gets into the college of her dreams and writing poetry in her notebook. But when she comes in second place in a Latiné heritage poetry contest - losing to a student with no Latinx heritage - she is thrust into the spotlight and in the middle of debates about diversity and identity.

Every Borrowed Beat by Erin Stewart, 6-12
Sydney admits she's lucky to have gotten a new heart and survived. But how is she supposed to move forward with her own life (and potential new love) when she can't stop thinking about her donor, her best friend is still waiting for her own new heart, and her new friend is still grieving his own loss?

An Expanse of Blue by Kauakanilehua Māhoe Adams, 9-12
Romantic debut novel-in-verse about a Native Hawaiian girl's fight to find belonging in a fracturing family, sharing a message of love with resounding emotional truth.

Finding My Way by Malala Yousafzai, 9-12
Years after she was shot by the Taliban for advocating for girls' education, Malala has written a second memoir about her experiences as a student at Oxford, as an internationally celebrated (and criticized) activist, as a woman navigating first love, and as a young person navigating her parents' and the world's expectations for her.

Finish Lines by Sarah Broyles and illustrated by Hanna Schroy, 9-12
Can a perfectionist survive the wild long enough to find out who she is outside of a college checklist?

Flip by Ngozi Ukazu, 6-12
After a disastrous promposal, Chi-chi Ekeh switches bodies with her crush Flip Henderson. They learn to experience the world from the other's perspective, from dealing with microaggressions to learning to swim.

Heiress of Nowhere by Stacey Lee, 6-12
Lucy Nowhere has spent her eighteen years working on the vast estate of the eccentric shipbuilder who took her in after she washed ashore in a green canoe as a baby. When she discovers his severed head, she has to find the murderer before she becomes the primary suspect, and before she becomes the next victim.

Honeysuckle and Bone by Trisha Tobias, 9-12
Honeysuckle and Bone is a deliciously atmospheric and utterly spooky young adult novel, perfect for fans of She is a Haunting, following an imperfect yet courageous teen as she seeks to remake herself in the homeland she always idealized, discovering that new beginnings don’t always come easy.

Hunger's Bite by Robin Taylor, 6-12
Friends Neeta and Emery have grown up together on the ship the Lark. But when a new owner and a suspicious passenger embark on the most recent trip, they have to figure out how to save themselves and their friendship.

King of the Neuroverse by Idris Goodwin, 6-12
For the third summer in a row, Pernell is back in the classroom, facing the same struggles that have always made school seem more like a battlefield than a place of learning. This summer is different, though: he’s battling to become the Cypher King, leader of the lunchroom’s impromptu rap circles...In a world where the systems are turned against kids like him, Pernell needs to find a way to succeed with his ADHD, rather than in spite of it.

Landing in Place by Sherine Hamdy and illustrated by Myra El Mir, 9-12
A poignant coming-of-age graphic novel about an Egyptian American girl grappling with college, her family, and the political realities of her wider world.

The Leaving Room by Amber McBride, 9-12
Two Keepers, who help children's souls move along to the after life, fall in love when they become entangled in the space between life and death

Legendary Frybread Drive-In by Cynthia Leitich Smith, 9-12
This anthology is a collection of interconnected stories that all have one thing in common: Sandy June's Legendary Frybread Drive-In. It shows up when you need it the most, and it provides the Native characters in the anthology with not just the world's best frybread; it serves up live music, crushes, family reunions, and space to safely grow up.

Light in the Canyon by Darren Cools, 6-12
A year after her mother's death, Halley is still struggling with grief when a mysterious explosion during one of her uncle's scientific experiments causes her to disappear. As lonely Jamie and neighborhood librarian Raina become caught up in the aftermath, they join Halley's father in unraveling a mystery that leads to a long-forgotten farmhouse and a tragedy from the past. Together, they discover that the explosion may have connected their lives in ways they never imagined.

Medicine Wheels by Byron Graves, 9-12
After his mother's arrest, fifteen-year-old Bryce returns to the Wolf Creek Reservation to stay with his grandparents. Because it reminds him of this late father, Bryce takes up skateboarding and reconnects with some old friends. Along the way, he learns the value of community and the true meaning of unconditional love.

Never Seen the Stars by Kate Korsh, 9-12
Hattie is keeping it a secret that she has a genetic eye disease that will eventually leave her blind just like her father. She is also dealing with the unexpected death of her friend Mason.

Nobody in Particular by Sophie Gonzales, 9-12
All of Henland is waiting for the Crowned Princess Rosemary to make another mistake following a scandal that lost the trust of both her country and her best friend. She can't afford any distractions right now, but then she meets the new American student, Danni, and she finds herself very distracted. Attending Bramppath College on a music scholarship, Danni expects to be an outcast amongst her peers until the ex-best friend of the princess brings her into the friend group. When somebody sees something they shouldn't, rumors circulate social media about the two of them. They must find a way to deflect the rumors to protect Rose's reputation and hide their budding relationship.

The Ocean Would Paint Me Blue by Zoulfa Katouh, 9-12
Poignant novel about a Syrian American girl who uses a magical sketchbook to turn her grief into art, painting miraculous murals of her mother’s life in Syria.

The Oks are Not Ok by Grace Shim, 9-12
Elena has made quite the name for herself as an influencer, but when her rich family's circumstances drastically change and she's forced to move to Blaire - a tiny nowhere town with no wifi - she feels like her life is totally over. However, in Blaire, Elena learns how business-savvy she really is, and finally feels like she's a member of her family and her community.

One Word, Six Letter by Adib Khorram, 6-12
Dayton and Farshid couldn't be more different. When Dayton acts on a dare and shouts a slur during a school-wide assembly, both boys are forced to grapple with the ripple effects and come to terms with who they are and whether they have the courage to defy societal expectations.

Ours to Tell: Reclaiming Indigenous Stories by Eldon Yellowhorn and Kathy Lowinger, 6-12
In Ours to Tell, sixteen Indigenous creators relate traditions, accounts of historical events, and their own lived experiences.

Postscript by McCarthy Cory, 9-12
Postscript is a YA novel set after a climate apocalypse, where a small group of survivors lives among bits of land around what was once Cape Cod. The story follows lonely but open-hearted West, whose perspective contrasts with other survivors he encounters. As the characters navigate this changed world, West's presence influences how the group relates to one another and forms connections.

Ramin Abbas Has Major Questions by Ahmed Saber, 6-12
Ramin Abbas has spent his whole life obeying his parents, his Imam, and of course, Allah, without question. But when he starts crushing on the handsome captain of the soccer team, so many things he'd always been so sure about are becoming questions.

The Scammer by Tiffany D. Jackson, 9-12
Jordyn, a freshman at a prestigious HBCU, is grieving the death of her brother while trying to find her place and identity. When her roommate's ex-convict brother moves into their dorm suite, he uses manipulation, financial coercion, and cult-like control to isolate and exploit the group. To survive, Jordyn must uncover his dangerous secrets before he destroys all of their lives.

Semi-Well Adjusted Despite Literally Everything by Alyson Stoner, 9-12
In this memoir, the author reflects on their experiences as a child star navigating fame, exploitation, family violence, religious trauma, mental health struggles, and an eating disorder while working in the entertainment industry. Through candid personal stories, the author explores trauma, identity, recovery, and the ongoing process of building a life rooted in self-acceptance and healing.

Shards of Silence by Brian Lee Young, 9-12
Brian Lee Young (Diné) bridges the generational divide between a Navajo teen at an elite prep school and his great-grandmother's experience at a federal boarding school for Indigenous students. The book is an eye-opening call for community healing and a profound coming-of-age story.

Someday Perfect by Kat Schneider, 9-12
In this beautiful graphic novel, a teen is tested when she falls for another camper at a Christian sleepaway camp, sparking feelings she was taught to suppress. As she grapples with the rigid expectations of her faith, she embarks on a journey of self-discovery that challenges her deepest beliefs.

Something to Be Proud Of by Anna Zoe Quirke, 9-12
Imogen - an autistic bisexual who dreams of a career in stand-up - is frustrated with how inaccessible her first experience at Pride is. Luckily, she's not the kind of person to sit idly by, and she feels like the openly gay captain of the football team is just the kind of person to help her. They start a school Activism Club, and - with help from a dream team - they start to make changes in their school and beyond.

Steam by Shaenon Garrity, 6-12
A genius humanoid escapes the university lab where she was made and gets a job at a local coffee shop in this “hilarious...excellent” young adult graphic novel perfect for fans of Giant Days and Heartstopper." Her new mission is to help her found family find happiness, before she gets caught in the real world.

This Wretched Beauty by Elle Grenier, 9-12
A trans aristocrat tumbles down a treacherous path in this YA remix of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Together We See by Ari Tison, 9--12
When Ulá and her brother Kabék travel to their family's tribal land in Costa Rica to bury their father, they discover that his death may not have been due to natural causes. They have very little time and even fewer leads, but plenty of people who do not want them to learn the truth.

Top Heavy by Rhonda DeChambeau, 6-12
Esme has worked for years to be a dancer. It's all she's ever wanted. When she secures a spot with an Elite dance team, she faces ridicule from the other dancers for her large chest, then is assaulted while out with her friend. She explores reduction surgery and struggles with the emotions related to her body struggles.

Truth Is by Hannah V. Sawyer, 9-12
17-year-old poet Truth Bangura is dealing with an emotionally difficult home life and the challenge of figuring out what comes next after high school. An unexpected pregnancy leaves her with even more questions. She finds her voice through slam poetry, but didn't expect her poem about having an abortion to go viral.

Under the Same Stars by Libba Bray, 9-12
The story weaves together three timelines, 1940s Germany, 1980 Berlin, and 2020 NYC. The stories overlap to uncover the truth about the disappearance of three teenagers during World War II.

Until We Meet Again by Lily Kim, 9-12
In this graphic novel, Lily's family is constantly on the move, resettling in different towns across Canada and, eventually, in Shanghai, China. Her father plays the role of primary caregiver while her mother is absent for long periods of time and struggles with her mental health. Can she escape the inherited trauma passed down by her immigrant parents?

Wake Now in the Fire by Jarrett Dapier, 9-12
Students at a Chicago high school are shocked when a beloved book is pulled from their classrooms. They see no reasons for the banning of Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi. Some students organize a protest while students on the staff of the school newspaper dig into what caused the book to be yanked from all Chicago Public Schools. It is based on real events from 2013.

We Could Be Anyone by Anna-Marie McLemore, 9-12
In 1950s Hollywood, Lola and Lisandro, two teenage con artists who make a living by pretending to be a ghost and a spiritualist and using fake hauntings to scam wealthy elites following the loss of their parents. Driven by grief and fierce sibling loyalty, they navigate dangerous power dynamics, systemic racism, and high-society intrigue while discovering their own queer identities.

Whale Eyes: A Memoir about Seeing and Being Seen by James Robinson, 6-12
Told through an experimental mix of intimate anecdotes and interactive visuals, this book immerses readers in James’s experiences growing up with strabismus, allowing them to see the world through one eye at a time. With poignant illustrations by Eisner Award–nominated artist Brian Rea, James’s story equips readers of all ages with the tools to confront their discomfort with disability and turn confused, blank stares into powerful connections.

When It’s Your Turn for Midnight by Blessing Musariri, 6-12

When fifteen-year-old Chianti learns that her dad isn’t her biological father, her family splinters. Chianti goes to stay with her maternal grandmother, Ambuya, an eccentric and formidable ex-freedom fighter in Zimbabwe’s civil war. As she wrestles with the ghosts of her grandmother's friend's past as well her own, she realizes that time is slippery, that family isn’t defined by blood, and that it’s never too late for a transformation.

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