



social and emotional learning

diverse reading list

Discover our educator favorites for SEL read-alouds to pair with your curriculum!

These exemplar texts will help you model and explore strategies for tackling challenges and building community. Both fiction and nonfiction titles feature protagonists from diverse backgrounds and are written by award-winning authors and illustrators.

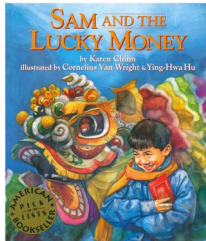
Check each Lee & Low book's link for corresponding lesson ideas and activities.



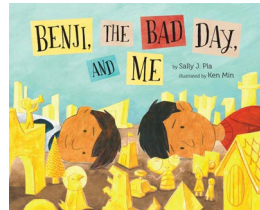
empathy

teaching students the ability to understand the feelings of another person

grades preK-2

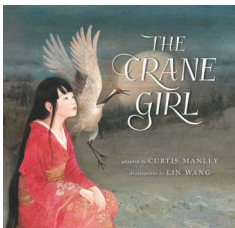


SAM AND THE LUCKY MONEY • written by Karen Chinn, illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright & Ying-Hwa Hu • When a young Chinese American boy sets out to spend the lucky money he receives for Chinese New Year, he discovers that no gift is too small when it comes from the heart. (Also available in Chinese and Spanish.) • leeandlow.com/books/sam-and-the-lucky-money

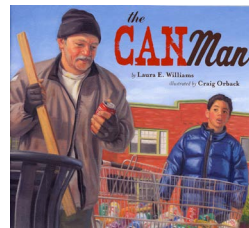


BENJI, THE BAD DAY, AND ME • written by Sally J. Pla, illustrated by Ken Min • Sammy is having the absolute rottenest, worst day ever. His little brother, Benji, knows exactly what that's like in this tender, neurodiverse story. • leeandlow.com/books/benji-the-bad-day-and-me

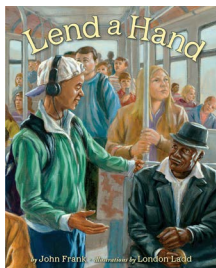
grades 3-5



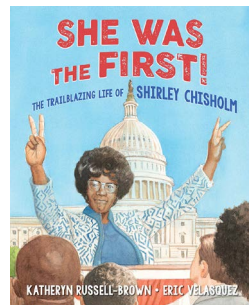
THE CRANE GIRL • written by Curtis Manley, illustrated by Lin Wang • A boy helps an injured crane, which then returns in human form to weave silk and save the boy and his father from poverty. Adapted from Japanese folktales and told in alternating prose and haiku. • leeandlow.com/books/the-crane-girl



THE CAN MAN • written by Laura E. Williams, illustrated by Craig Orback • To earn money, a young boy decides to collect and redeem empty cans, but ends up giving his money away to a homeless man. • leeandlow.com/books/the-can-man

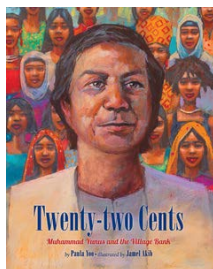


LEND A HAND: POEMS ABOUT GIVING • written by John Frank, illustrated by London Ladd • Poems about sharing and making a small difference in someone's life. • leeandlow.com/books/lend-a-hand

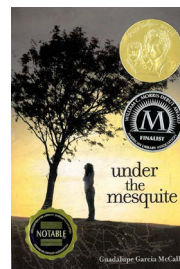


SHE WAS THE FIRST!: THE TRAILBLAZING LIFE OF SHIRLEY CHISHOLM • written by Kathryn Russell-Brown, illustrated by Eric Velasquez • A timely, inspiring picture book biography of the dynamic twentieth-century educator, activist, and politician Shirley Chisholm. • leeandlow.com/books/she-was-the-first

grades 6-8



TWENTY-TWO CENTS: MUHAMMAD YUNUS AND THE VILLAGE BANK • written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Jamel Akib • A biography of 2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, who revolutionized antipoverty efforts by developing the innovative concept of micro-lending. • leeandlow.com/books/twenty-two-cents



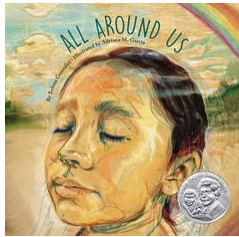
UNDER THE MESQUITE • written by Guadalupe Garcia McCall • Lupita, a budding actor and poet in a close-knit Mexican American immigrant family, comes of age as she struggles with adult responsibilities during her mother's long illness. • leeandlow.com/books/under-the-mesquite



positive relationships

teaching students how to interact with others in respectful & kind ways

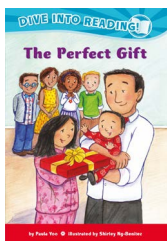
grades preK-2



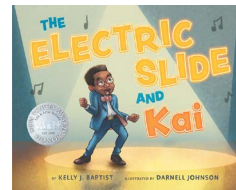
ALL AROUND US • written by Xelena González, illustrated by Adriana García • This gorgeous picture book -- winner of the Pura Belpré Illustrator Honor and American Indian Youth Literature Award Picture Book Honor—celebrates the circles that surround us, in the sky, the earth, our neighborhoods, ourselves ... if we just dare to look for them. (Also available in Spanish.) leeandlow.com/books/all-around-us



JUNA AND APPA • written by Jane Park, illustrated by Felicia Hoshino • From the creators of the award-winning picture book *Juna's Jar*, comes a new magical tale where Juna embarks on a journey to help her biggest hero—her Appa! leeandlow.com/books/juna-and-appa

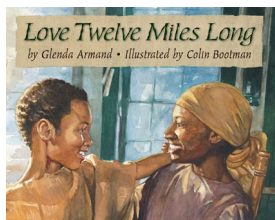


THE PERFECT GIFT • written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Shirley Ng-Benitez • In this early chapter book from the popular Confetti Kids series, Mei's little brother is turning 100 days old, and Mei is determined to find the perfect gift for his special day. leeandlow.com/books/the-perfect-gift



THE ELECTRIC SLIDE AND KAI • written by Kelly Baptist, illustrated by Darnell Johnson • Kai is the only member of his family who can't get the dance steps to the Electric Slide right. But Kai is determined to bust a move in this fun and sweet celebration of African American families. leeandlow.com/books/the-electric-slide-and-kai

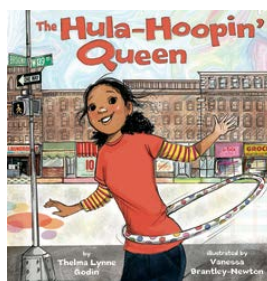
grades 3-5



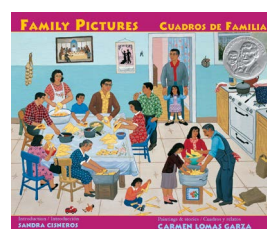
LOVE TWELVE MILES LONG • written by Glenda Armand, illustrated by Colin Bootman • Set on a plantation in the 1820s in Maryland, this story based on the life of young Frederick Douglass shows the power of his mother's love. leeandlow.com/books/love-twelve-miles-long



JULIETA AND THE DIAMOND ENIGMA • written by Luisana Duarte Armendáriz • From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler meets Merci Suarez in this smart young middle-grade mystery about a diamond gone missing from the Louvre and the sweet and spunky girl who cracks the case. leeandlow.com/books/julieta-and-the-diamond-enigma

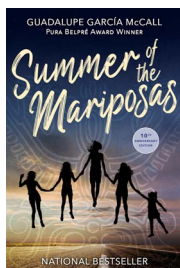


THE HULA-HOOPIN' QUEEN • written by Thelma Lynne Godin, illustrated by Vanessa Brantley-Newton • A spunky African American girl has a hula-hooping competition with her friends in Harlem, and soon everyone in the neighborhood, young and old alike, joins in on the fun. • leeandlow.com/books/the-hula-hoopin-queen



FAMILY PICTURES/CUADROS DE FAMILIA • written and illustrated by Carmen Lomas Garza • The story of Carmen Lomas Garza's girlhood in Kingsville, Texas, told through fifteen paintings and stories, each focusing on a different aspect of Carmen's traditional Mexican American culture as she grew up. (Bilingual English/Spanish.) leeandlow.com/books/family-pictures-cuadros-de-familia

grades 6-8



SUMMER OF THE MARIPOSAS • written by Guadalupe García McCall • In this creative retelling of *The Odyssey*, fifteen-year-old Odilia and her younger sisters embark on a journey to return a dead man to his family in Mexico, and must outwit monsters and witches to make it back home again. (Also available in Spanish.) leeandlow.com/books/summer-of-the-mariposas

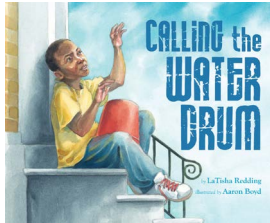


BLESSING'S BEAD • written by Debby Dahl Edwardson • This acclaimed middle-grade novel traces four generations of an Iñupiaq family in Alaska, which the *Washington Post* praised as "a rare and beautiful book." leeandlow.com/books/blessing-s-bead

recognizing & managing emotions

teaching students how to handle their feelings

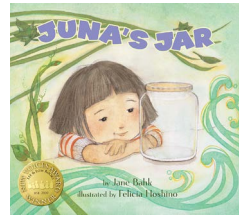
grades preK-2



CALLING THE WATER DRUM

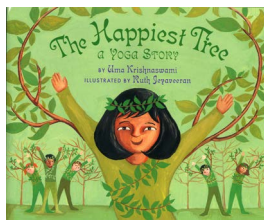
• written by LaTisha Redding, illustrated by Aaron Boyd • After a young Haitian boy loses his parents as they attempt to flee Haiti in a boat, he can only communicate with the outside world through playing his drum.

leeandlow.com/books/calling-the-water-drum



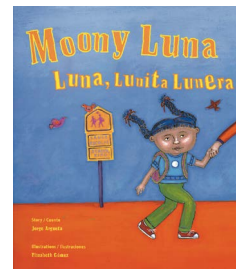
JUNA'S JAR • written by Jane Bahk, illustrated by Felicia Hoshino • Juna, an imaginative Korean American girl, goes on magical adventures, by way of her special kimchi jar, in search of her best friend who moved away.

leeandlow.com/books/juna-s-jar



THE HAPPIEST TREE: A YOGA STORY

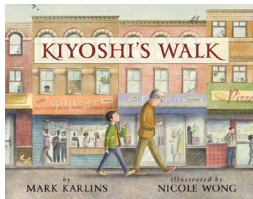
• written by Uma Krishnaswami, illustrated by Ruth Jeyaveeran • A young Indian American girl grows in self-confidence when she learns to practice yoga and apply the underlying principles to her performance in a school play. (Also available in Spanish.) • leeandlow.com/books/the-happiest-tree



MOONY LUNA/LUNA LUNITA LUNERA

• written by Jorge Argueta, illustrated by Elizabeth Gómez • A loving tale about a young girl afraid to go to school for the first time. (Bilingual English/Spanish.) • leeandlow.com/books/moony-luna-luna-lunita-lunera

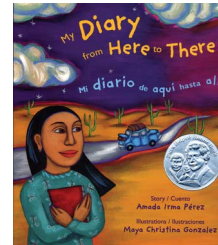
grades 3-5



KIYOSHI'S WALK

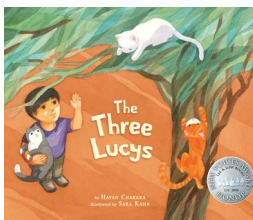
• written by Mark Karlins, illustrated by Nicole Wong • Where do poems come from? This beautiful picture book about a young aspiring poet and his grandfather shows that the answer lies all around us—if we take the time to look.

leeandlow.com/books/kiyoshi-s-walk



MY DIARY FROM HERE TO THERE/MI DIARIO DE AQUÍ HASTA ALLÁ

• written by Amada Irma Pérez, illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez • Amada records her fears, hopes and dreams about moving from Mexico to the other side of the border in California in her trusted diary. (Bilingual English/Spanish.) • leeandlow.com/books/my-diary-from-here-to-there-mi-diario-de-aqui-hasta-alla



THE THREE LUCYS • written by Hayan Charara, illustrated by Sara Kahn • When his village comes under attack and he loses one of his beloved cats, a young Lebanese boy must learn to hope for a peaceful future.

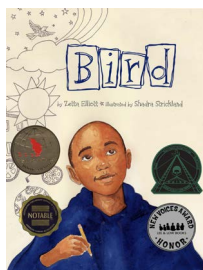
leeandlow.com/books/the-three-lucys



KIKI'S JOURNEY

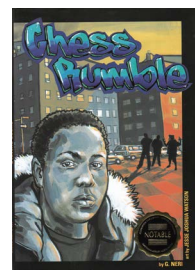
• written by Kristy Orona-Ramirez, illustrated by Jonathan Warm Day • Kiki's tender story sensitively portrays the rewards and challenges of contemporary Indian life, as Kiki grapples with her Tiwa Indian heritage and Los Angeles city roots. • leeandlow.com/books/kiki-s-journey

grades 6-8



BIRD

• written by Zetta Elliott, illustrated by Shadra Strickland • An African American boy nicknamed Bird uses drawing as a creative outlet as he struggles to make sense of his grandfather's death and his brother's drug addiction. • leeandlow.com/books/bird



CHESS RUMBLE

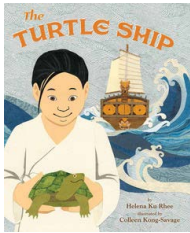
• written by G. Neri, illustrated by Jesse Joshua Watson • In this longer story told in free verse, a troubled boy learns to use his mind instead of his fists through the guidance of an unconventional mentor and the game of chess. leeandlow.com/books/chess-rumble



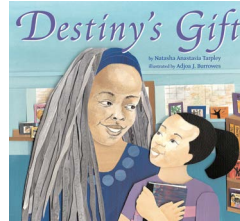
problem-solving

teaching students how to find a solution to a complicated issue or situation

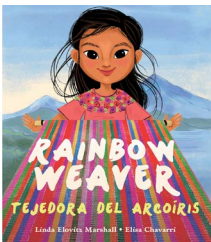
grades preK-2



THE TURTLE SHIP • written by Helena Ku Rhee, illustrated by Colleen Kong-Savage • A young Korean boy named Sun-shin designs one of the greatest battleships in history and fulfills his dream of sailing the world. • leeandlow.com/books/the-turtle-ship



DESTINY'S GIFT • written by Natasha Anastasia Tarpley, illustrated by Adjoa J. Burrowes • Destiny tries to keep her friend's neighborhood bookstore from going out of business by using her resourcefulness and creativity. • leeandlow.com/books/destiny-s-gift

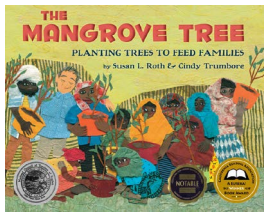


RAINBOW WEAVER/TEJEDORA DEL ARCOÍRIS • written by Linda Elovitz Marshall, illustrated by Elisa Chavarri • A young Mayan girl isn't allowed to use her mother's thread to weave, so with a little ingenuity, she discovers how to repurpose plastic bags to create colorful weavings. Based on an actual recycling movement in Guatemala. (Bilingual English/Spanish.) • leeandlow.com/books/rainbow-weaver-tejedora-del-arcoiris



FINDING THE MUSIC/EN POS DE LA MÚSICA • written by Jennifer Torres, illustrated by Renato Alarcão • In this bilingual book, a determined Latina girl accidentally breaks her grandfather's vihuela and ventures into her community to find someone who can fix the instrument, leading her to discover her grandfather's legacy as a mariachi player. (Bilingual English/Spanish.) • leeandlow.com/books/finding-the-music-en-pos-de-la-musica

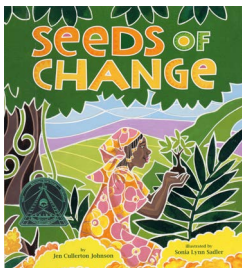
grades 3-5



THE MANGROVE TREE: PLANTING TREES TO FEED FAMILIES • written by Susan L. Roth and Cindy Trumbore, illustrated by Susan L. Roth • With alternating verse and prose passages, readers discover how Dr. Gordon Sato's mangrove-tree planting project transformed an impoverished village in Eritrea into a self-sufficient community. • leeandlow.com/books/the-mangrove-tree



SEVEN GOLDEN RINGS • written by Rajani Larooca, illustrated by Archana Sreenivasan • In this clever, convivial picture book, an Indian boy untangles a mathematical conundrum to win a place at the Rajah's court. • leeandlow.com/books/seven-golden-rings



SEEDS OF CHANGE: PLANTING A PATH TO PEACE • written by Jen Cullerton Johnson, illustrated by Sonia Lynn Sadler • This picture book biography profiles scientist Wangari Maathai, the first African woman — and first environmentalist — to win a Nobel Peace Prize for her work planting trees in her native Kenya. • leeandlow.com/books/seeds-of-change

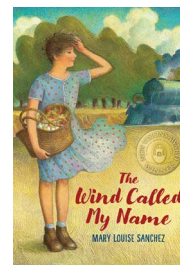


STRONG AS FIRE, FIERCE AS FLAME • written by Supriya Kelkar • In 1857 India, 12-year-old Meera escapes a life she has no say in—and certain death on her husband's funeral pyre—only to end up a servant to a British general in the East India Company. When a rebellion against British colonizers spreads, she must choose between relative safety in a British household or standing up for herself and her people. • leeandlow.com/books/strong-as-fire-fierce-as-flame

grades 6-8



MARTÍ'S SONG FOR FREEDOM/MARTÍ Y SUS VERSOS POR LA LIBERTAD • written by Emma Otheguy, illustrated by Beatriz Vidal • José Martí dedicated his life to the promotion of liberty: the abolishment of slavery, political independence for Cuba, and intellectual independence from colonialism for all Latinos. This bilingual biography is written in verse with excerpts from Martí's seminal work, *Versos Sencillos*. (Bilingual English/Spanish.) • leeandlow.com/books/marti-s-song-for-freedom-marti-y-sus-versos-por-la-libertad



THE WIND CALLED MY NAME • written by Mary Louise Sanchez • In this heartwarming historical middle-grade set in the 1930s, Margarita Sandoval and her family try to navigate the shifting winds of belonging in their new Wyoming town. • leeandlow.com/books/the-wind-called-my-name



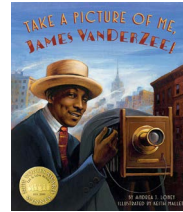
grit & perseverance

teaching students to achieve success despite difficulty or obstacles in the way

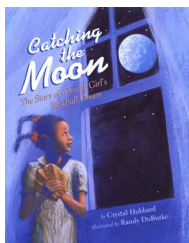
grades preK-2



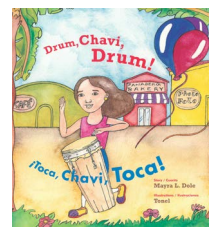
GEORGE CRUM AND THE SARATOGA CHIP • written by Gaylia Taylor, illustrated by Frank Morrison • An account of the life and career of George Crum, a biracial chef who is credited with the invention of the potato chip at a Saratoga Springs, New York, restaurant in 1853. • leeandlow.com/books/george-crum-and-the-saratoga-chip



TAKE A PICTURE OF ME, JAMES VANDERZEE! • written by Andrea J. Loney, illustrated by Keith Mallett • A biography of James VanDerZee, innovative and celebrated African American photographer of the Harlem Renaissance. • leeandlow.com/books/take-a-picture-of-me-james-van-der-zee

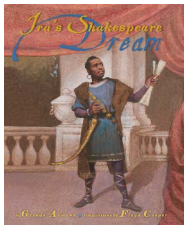


CATCHING THE MOON: THE STORY OF A YOUNG GIRL'S BASEBALL DREAM • written by Crystal Hubbard, illustrated by Randy DuBurke • The spirited story of Marcenia Lyle, the African American girl who grew up to become "Toni Stone," the first woman to play for an all-male professional baseball team. • leeandlow.com/books/catching-the-moon

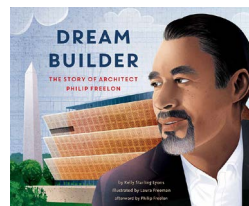


DRUM, CHAVI, DRUM!/TOCA, CHAVI, TOCA! • written by Mayra L. Dole, illustrated by Tonel • Even though nobody in her neighborhood thinks girls should play the drums, Chavi knows she was born to drum. (Bilingual English/Spanish.) • leeandlow.com/books/drum-chavi-drum-toca-chavi-toca

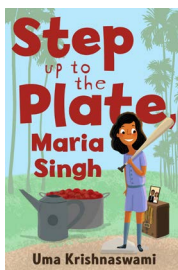
grades 3-5



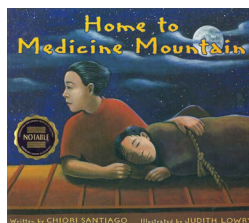
IRA'S SHAKESPEARE DREAM • written by Glenda Armand, illustrated by Floyd Cooper • A biography chronicling the life of Ira Aldridge, an African American performer who is considered to be one of the greatest Shakespearean actors of the nineteenth century. • leeandlow.com/books/ira-s-shakespeare-dream



DREAM BUILDER: THE STORY OF ARCHITECT PHILIP FREELON • written by Kelly Starling Lyons, illustrated by Laura Freeman • You've seen the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Now meet the man whose life went into building it. • leeandlow.com/books/dream-builder

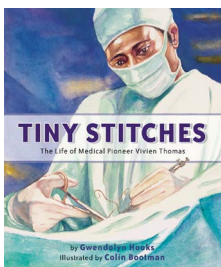


STEP UP TO THE PLATE, MARIA SINGH • written by Uma Krishnaswami • While her parents and neighbors are struggling through World War II, working for India's independence, and trying to stay on their farmland, nine-year-old Maria Singh learns to play softball just like her heroes in the All-American Girls' League. • leeandlow.com/books/step-up-to-the-plate-maria-singh

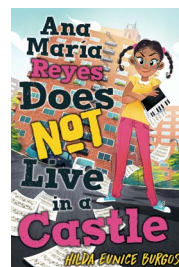


HOME TO MEDICINE MOUNTAIN • written by Chiori Santiago, illustrated by Judith Lowry • Two young Maidu Indian brothers, sent to live at a government-run Indian residential school in California in the 1930s, find a way to escape and return home for the summer. • leeandlow.com/books/home-to-medicine-mountain

grades 6-8



TINY STITCHES: THE LIFE OF MEDICAL PIONEER VIVIEN THOMAS • written by Gwendolyn Hooks, illustrated by Colin Bootman • The life story of Vivien Thomas, an African American surgical technician who developed the first procedure used to perform open-heart surgery on children. • leeandlow.com/books/tiny-stitches



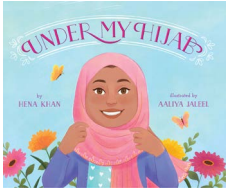
ANA MARÍA REYES DOES NOT LIVE IN A CASTLE • written by Hilda Eunice Burgos • The Penderwicks meets *In the Heights* in this sparkling middle-grade debut about a young Dominican American girl in New York City. • leeandlow.com/books/ana-maria-reyes-does-not-live-in-a-castle



perspective-taking

teaching students about seeing a situation from another person's point of view

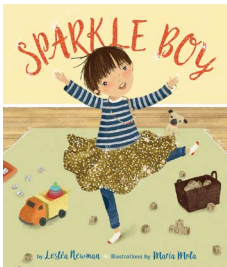
grades preK-2



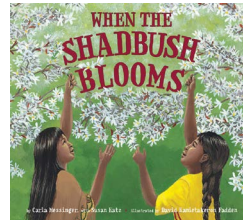
UNDER MY HIJAB • written by Hena Khan, illustrated by Aaliya Jaleel • This lovely book from the author of *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns* invites readers to understand and appreciate hijab and the Muslim women who decide to wear it. leeandlow.com/books/under-my-hijab



MAMÁ THE ALIEN/MAMÁ LA EXTRATERRESTRE • written by René Colato Laínez, illustrated by Laura Lacámara • A young girl sees the word "alien" on her mother's Resident Alien card and worries her mother is from another planet, until she finds out that the word has more than one meaning. (Bilingual English/Spanish.) leeandlow.com/books/mama-the-alien-mama-la-extraterrestre

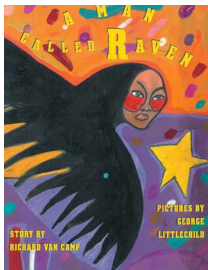


SPARKLE BOY • written by Lesléa Newman, illustrated by Maria Mola • Young Casey loves sparkly things, but his older sister Jessie does not approve of his interest until an encounter with bullies helps her learn to accept and respect Casey for who he is. leeandlow.com/books/sparkle-boy

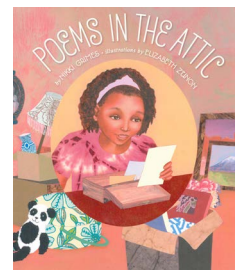


WHEN THE SHADBUSH BLOOMS • written by Carla Messinger with Susan Katz, illustrated by David Kanietakeron Fadden • A young Lenape Indian girl observes and reflects on the small, important ways her family today, and her ancestors generations before, celebrate the cycle of seasons. leeandlow.com/books/when-the-shadbush-blooms

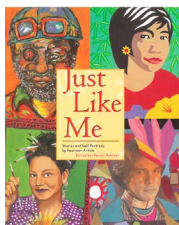
grades 3-5



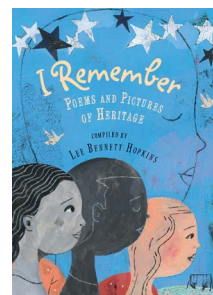
A MAN CALLED RAVEN • written by Richard Van Camp, illustrated by George Littlechild • Set in the Northwest Territories of Canada, Van Camp's contemporary Native story draws from the animal legends and folklore told to him by his Dogrib elders. Littlechild's bold use of color and perspective captures the sense of mystery and magic surrounding a strange raven man who teaches two boys the meaning of respect for nature. leeandlow.com/books/a-man-called-raven



POEMS IN THE ATTIC • written by Nikki Grimes, illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon • A young girl becomes closer to her mother after discovering a box of poems her mother wrote about her experiences growing up as the child of an Air Force serviceman and living around the world. Told in alternating free verse and tanka (similar to haiku) poems in different perspectives. leeandlow.com/books/poems-in-the-attic



JUST LIKE ME • edited by Harriet Rohmer, illustrated by Fourteen Artists • Through stories, paintings, and childhood photographs, these fourteen artists open their hearts and invite us to enter their worlds. leeandlow.com/books/just-like-me

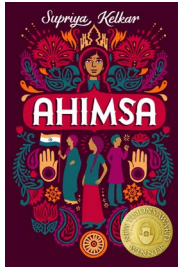


I REMEMBER: POEMS AND PICTURES OF HERITAGE • edited by Lee Bennett Hopkins, written by various poets, illustrated by various artists • An outstanding celebration of diversity and family: fourteen poets and sixteen illustrators of diverse backgrounds share memorable childhood experiences and reflect upon their different heritages, traditions, and beliefs. leeandlow.com/books/i-remember

perspective-taking

teaching students about seeing a situation from another person's point of view

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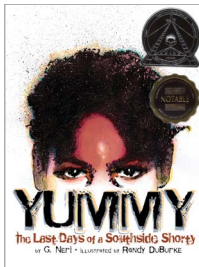
AHIMSA • written by Supriya Kelkar

• In this historical novel, Gandhi asks for one member of each family to join the fight for independence from the British, and when Anjali's mother is jailed for doing so, Anjali must step out of her comfort zone to take over her mother's work. • leeandlow.com/books/ahimsa



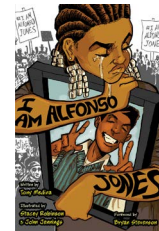
BOY, EVERYWHERE • written by A. M. Dassu

• What turns citizens into refugees and then immigrants? In this powerful middle-grade debut, Sami and his family embark on a harrowing journey to save themselves from the Syrian civil war. • leeandlow.com/books/boy-everywhere



YUMMY: THE LAST DAYS OF A SOUTHSIDE SHORTY • written by G. Neri, illustrated by Randy DuBurke

This graphic novel is based on the true story of Robert "Yummy" Sandifer, an eleven-year-old boy from Chicago's South Side who was killed by his own gang members. • leeandlow.com/books/yummy



I AM ALFONSO JONES • written by Tony Medina, illustrated by Stacey Robinson and John Jennings

The Hate U Give meets *The Lovely Bones* in this unflinching graphic novel about the afterlife of a young man killed by an off-duty police officer, co-illustrated by *New York Times* bestselling artist John Jennings. • leeandlow.com/books/i-am-alfonso-jones

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