

LEE & LOW BOOKS
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Press Release

LEE & LOW BOOKS ANNOUNCES 2020 NEW VOICES AWARD WINNERS

New York, NY—January 19, 2021—LEE & LOW BOOKS is excited to announce that Vanessa Lewis of Hawthorne, California, is the winner of the company’s twenty-first annual New Voices Award. Her picture-book manuscript, *Shamu*, addresses homelessness in America through the story of a young girl whose resourcefulness and confidence help her meet everyday challenges at home and school.

Vanessa Lewis is a lifelong writer who draws inspiration from her experiences as an educator in a large, diverse school district. Through children’s literature, Lewis aims to build her students’ confidence in their individual capabilities. Lewis hopes that children who read *Shamu* will feel inspired to be more considerate and be reminded that a little kindness goes a long way. Lewis will receive a prize of \$2,000 and a publication contract.

LEE & LOW BOOKS is also proud to announce that Jehan Madhani from Houston, Texas, will receive the New Voices Award Honor for her picture-book manuscript *Eli and the Uncles*. Inspired by Madhani’s family and culture, *Eli and the Uncles* offers a softer example of masculinity through the loving relationship between a boy and his eight boisterous, bearded uncles.

Jehan Madhani is a screenwriter in children’s media who is passionate about diverse narratives that celebrate people of color and the immigrant experience. She wants her nephew and other kids to see their names, families, and communities reflected in the stories that they read. Madhani will receive a prize of \$1000.

Congratulations to **Vanessa Lewis** and **Jehan Madhani**!

ABOUT THE AWARD: Established in 2000, the New Voices Award encourages writers of color to submit their work to Lee & Low Books, which takes pride in nurturing authors new to the world of children’s book publishing. Published past winners include [It Jes’ Happened: When Bill Traylor Started to Draw](#) by Don Tate, winner of the Ezra Jack Keats New Writer Award Honor; [Bird](#) by Zetta Elliott, an ALA Notable Book; [Juna’s Jar](#) by Jane Bahk, a Spring 2015 Junior Library Guild selection; and [Take A Picture of Me, James VanDerZee](#) by Andrea Loney, an NAACP Image Award nominee. For more information, visit our [New Voices Award](#) page.

Authors of color who write for older readers are encouraged to learn about our [New Visions Award](#) for middle grade and young adult manuscripts as well.