

The corners

Newsletter of the Teaching Resources Collection at Bishop Grosseteste University Library

Welcome to the second issue of *The Four Corners*, a free children’s literature newsletter published by the Library at BGU to promote its children’s literature collection in the Teaching Resources Collection (TRC). It is published bi-annually and edited by Rose Roberto, Teaching Resources Librarian, and Amy Webster, Senior Lecturer in Education Studies. In addition to our regular features listed below, we also have special feature

articles related to this issue’s theme: award-winning books—books that have won awards, as well as books that some of our contributors thought *should* win an award.



Display of CILIP's 2021 CKG short-listed books BGU Library, June 2021

Photo by Rose Roberto

In June every year, CILIP (the Library and Information Association) presents the Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medals, which are the UK’s oldest and best-loved children’s book awards, recognising outstanding reading experiences created by writers and illustrators for children and young adults. This year was also the first time CILIP Shadders’ Choice Awards were presented by reading groups at schools and public libraries

throughout the country, as part of the scheme to encourage reading for pleasure for this nation’s youth. Groups are invited to vote for their favourite book from each Medal shortlist. Each shadowing group is entitled to one vote per Medal, so Shadders work together, just like the Medal judges, to decide which two books will win their votes. See pages 2-3, which cover this year’s award winners. Additionally, on 1 July, the winners of the UK Literacy Association (UKLA) awards were revealed. Deborah McLaren, Director of Lovereading4kids, said: ‘The UKLA committees and teacher judges have done a wonderful job of curating a stunning selection of quality texts and great reads to engage every age range.’

In general, receiving a book award provides authors and illustrators not only with a monetary prize (CILIP Awards are worth £5000), awards also considerably prolong the shelf life of a prize winner. In this issue we explore what values we place on certain books, and what certain books, especially prize-winning ones, say about their readers and the wider culture that chooses to read them and pass judgement upon them. We also ask these questions: Do our books reflect us, or do we project ourselves into them? What is significant about a book winning one or any prize?

Contents of this Issue

<p>Representation(s) in books -ROSE ROBERTO, 2-3</p> <p>UKLA Book Awards -SOPHIE LONGNEY, 4</p> <p>Literature Changed My Life -EMMA ROGERS, 5 -ALISON TAYLOR, 6-7</p>	<p>‘These titles moved us’ feature articles by:</p> <p>-AMY WEBSTER, 8-9 -ALISON TAYLOR, 9 -ELLA FERN TUXFORD, 10 -ANGELA WADDELL, 10 -NICOLE MCGARRELL, 10</p> <p>-SOPHIE LONGNEY, 11 -IRIS (YEAR 4 PRIMARY), 11 -MARY-LOUISE MAYNES, 12 -EDWARD COLLYER, 12-13</p>	<p>Around BGU Campus</p> <p>BLACK HISTORY MONTH, 14 JOIN A BOOK CLUB, 14 BGU’S MA IN CHILDREN’S LITERATURE + LITERACIES, 14</p>
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Growing Representation(s) in award winning books



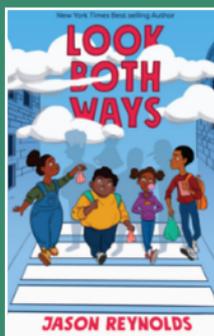
BY ROSE ROBERTO, TEACHING RESOURCES LIBRARIAN

One of the library assistants observed that I was adding quite a lot of books from North America to stock during my first year as Teaching Resources Librarian, meaning, that we would need to move some of the TRC books currently on the shelves. British novels and picture books have and will continue to occupy the most space. However, the trends in what the TRC acquires have shifted, not simply because I'm a librarian from an ethnic minority family originally from California, but because the priorities of the library and teaching professions have evolved to reflect the global multicultural world in which we live in today. The CILIP long- and short-lists for the Carnegie Medal for children's literature and for the Kate Greenaway Medal for best picture book make this change in priorities apparent. 'Actually,' I told her, 'it is a good thing I've been adding them to stock. This year's winners of the CILIP awards are an American and a Canadian.'



YA Section of TRC, photo by BGU Library

CILIP 2021
AWARD WINNERS



CARNEGIE MEDAL



KATE GREENAWAY MEDAL

The selection committees for both CILIP awards have been moving to represent diverse, international voices in works for children and young adults. Jason Reynolds, a resident of Washington, DC, secured his first Carnegie Medal win for *Look Both Ways* (Knights of Media, ISBN: 9781999642594) Reynolds has previously won the American Library Association (ALA) Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award for New Talent, the lucrative Kirkus Prize, and in January 2020 was named as the Library of Congress' national ambassador for young people's literature. Canadian illustrator Sydney Smith won the Kate Greenaway award for *Small in the City* (Walker, ISBN: 9781406392982). This is the second Greenaway award for the Halifax resident. In 2018 he received a Greenaway award for *Town Is by the Sea* (Walker, ISBN: 9781406378863), which depicts a day in the life of a boy in a 1950s coal-mining town. However, Smith expressed pleasure with the *Small in the City* win because it was his first time as both the author and illustrator.

In a recent article, 'Prize Culture and Diversity in British Children's Literature' appearing in the *International Research in Children's Literature*, notes the complex history and significance of prize winning books. 'Prizes are in affect a form of curation, they do not simply disseminate the "verdicts" of the wider literary culture' (Pearson, et al, 2019). In the past, these awards reflected who was seen as 'British' or who embodied 'British values' (Pearson, et al, 2019). The article also highlighted a change of priorities in 2017, when CILIP CEO Nick Poole responded to criticisms of previously all-white long-listed authors and illustrators for both the Carnegie and Kate Greenaway awards. This was not the first time that CILIP had been criticised since the establishment of the prizes in the early part of the 20th century—the Carnegie Medal in 1936 and the Greenaway Medal in 1955. During the 1960s and 1970s several awards such as the

Guardian Award, the Other Award, and the Children's Book Award, were established because critics and educators felt the Carnegie Medal was given to books that were 'safe' choices and far removed from the modern world. In fact, the early judges on these award panels were prestigious library managers that did not regularly work as children's librarians, and had no regular contact with children (Allen, p.128). They had a limited perspective of quality literature. 'Early Carnegie medal winners rarely depicted other cultures, but those that did constructed a sense of otherness against which white, English culture was positioned as the norm' (Pearson, et al., 2019). Over the years, CILIP award committees grappled with choosing books that promoted 'a sense of nationhood which [was] predicated on young readers' rediscovering history, heritage and the rural [British] landscape' (Pearson, 2019, 209). However, 'by solely championing British culture, history, values and identity from a middle-class White Eurocentric perspective', there was a concern that [other] 'ethnic, class and cultural heritages were presented as marginal and insignificant', writes Sadia Habib (quoted in Pearson, et al., 2019).

In response to this latest criticism in 2017, CILIP appointed Margaret Casely-Hayford, a British lawyer,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

businesswoman and notable public figure to head an independent review into 'how equality, diversity, inclusion and participation can best be championed' in both Carnegie and Kate Greenaway awards.

Casely-Hayford's report recommended that the awards should explicitly champion diversity, prioritise 'innovation' in writing, present 'shifting perceptions' and represent 'different backgrounds and experiences' as **indicators of** quality and excellence. The nominations process was also expanded to include nominations from external bodies such as Inclusive Minds, a charity working to break down barriers, challenge stereotypes, and ensure that every child can enjoy quality books that 'are representative of our diverse society' (Pearson, et al., 2019). This change in policy effected the 2019 awards selection process. Out of the twelve Carnegie long-listed books, six of the authors were people of colour, and one, Candy Gourlay, made the short-list. In 2020, there were also six authors of colour as well as a mix of different nationalities: Australian, Canadian, Dutch, Irish, as well as second-generation children of Americans and British immigrants. Unlike in 2019's shortlist, the 2020 books chosen for the list portrayed many main characters of colour, the LGBTQ community, the differently abled, and refugees and migrants whose narratives reacted to current political, economic or military policies that affected them.

Diversity in the selection of final winners was made possible by including voices of another sector — readers in British schools and local UK communities. Set up in the early 1990s, the CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Shadowing Schemes have reached thousands of young people in schools, public libraries and other reading environments where, inspired, they read and discuss the shortlisted CILIP titles and take part in creative and educational activity in book groups, in person, and increasingly during 2020-2021, online. Long-term studies show evidence that reading for pleasure increased empathy, improved interpersonal relationships, reduced the symptoms of depression and dementia, and improved wellbeing throughout life (ALCS, 2017). Building on this, the Shadders' Choice Award was established in 2019, as a special commendation voted for and presented by children and young people to vote on and award their overall favourite from both CILIP shortlists. Author Manjeet Mann won the Shadders' Choice Carnegie for her first novel, *Run, Rebel, Run* (Penguin, ISBN: 9780241411421). Illustrator Sharon King-Chai won the Shadders' Choice Kate Greenaway for her picture book *Starbird* (Pan Macmillan, ISBN: 9781509899579). Of note, both of these winners are women of colour and Manjeet's book also won a UKLA award in which the judges stated her work provided 'complex representation, universal themes, and visceral emotional impact.'



Award-winning books enjoy considerable prestige and longevity, and the act of selection constructs a national literary heritage. Whereas the average shelf life of a children's book today is roughly eighteen months, award-winning titles, decades old, are still in print. For the TRC, the new CILIP categories of winners indicate collecting all books on the Carnegie and Kate Greenaway long-lists, as well as the UKLA winners. These books represent our diverse, global society, as well as *quality* children's literature in English. Our collections will continue to reflect what was/is considered important at the time.

Further reading:

Allen, R. *Children's Book Prizes: An evaluation and history of major awards for children's books in the English-speaking World*. Ashgate, 1998.

ALCS [Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society] 'Reading for Life: 10 Years of the CILIP CKG Shadowing Scheme' 22 February 2017.

Pearson, L. Sands-O'Connor, K, and Subramanian, A. 'Prize Culture and Diversity in British Children's Literature' In *International Research in Children's Literature* July 2019, 12(1): 90-106

Pearson, L. 'Home, Heritage, History: Renegotiating Identity in Postwar Children's Fiction'. *Postwar: British Literature in Transition 1940-60*. Ed. Gill Plain. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. 209-24.

Sperling, S.V. 'A Brief History of Youth Libraries Group and CILIP's Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Awards'. YLG History. <https://www.cilip.org.uk/members/group_content_view.asp?group=201316&id=856521>

UKLA Book Awards + Teacher Shadowing Award Programme

BY SOPHIE LONGNEY, SENIOR LECTURER, PRIMARY EDUCATION

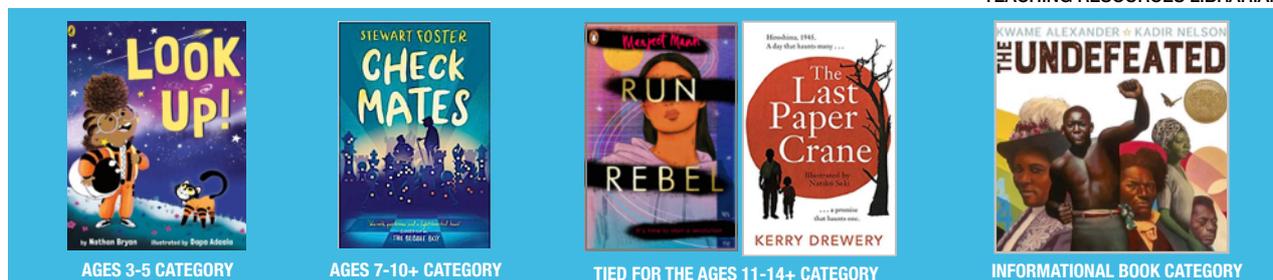
Promoting reading for pleasure has always been at the forefront of my classroom practice and educational philosophy. I have always enjoyed children's literature myself, and I strongly believe that sharing this enthusiasm significantly increases the likelihood of children becoming successful readers and raising educational standards. I have many fond memories from my teaching career of reading aloud to my class – mouths wide open, eyes eager with anticipation and children willing me to continue reading at the end of each chapter. The power of reading is really something special!

Having recently joined Bishop Grosseteste University as a Senior Lecturer in Initial Primary Education, I am looking forward to many opportunities to be able to share this passion with student teachers, providing them with the knowledge and confidence to also enjoy reading with their classes and reap the numerous benefits this will sow. I am also extremely excited to announce that next year I will be leading a discussion group of student teachers shadowing the UKLA Book Awards.

As a charity, UKLA's principal mission is supporting teaching and learning, and is open to anyone sharing its aims to inform all those concerned with the development of language, literacy and communication, encouraging them in reflection and dialogue, supporting their practice and giving public voice to their concerns. UKLA's Book Awards, announced annually in early July, are the only national children's book awards judged by active classroom teachers. UKLA aims to celebrate quality literature and encourage teachers to increase their professional and personal knowledge of recently published children's books and to promote the place of books in all educational settings from nursery to Key Stage 4. The books selected for the award will be titles that teachers can share with pupils as part of regular classroom experience. Selection committees and teacher judges are asked to look for well-written, engaging 'reads' and, where appropriate, outstanding illustration and design. The UKLA has created a truly magnificent shortlist of children's books this year, *The Girl Who Stole an Elephant* (Nosy Crow, ISBN: 9781788006347) in particular, is a novel that I have thoroughly enjoyed (see page 13). I am really looking forward the enjoyable discussions about next year's compilation of high-quality children's literature!

UKLA Award Winners for 2021 Announced

BY ROSE ROBERTO,
TEACHING RESOURCES LIBRARIAN



On 1 July 2021, UKLA announced five titles as the winners of four different UKLA awards for children divided by age groups. In the Ages 3-5 Category, *Look Up!* (Puffin, ISBN: 9780241345849) illustrated by Dapo Adeola and written by Nathan Bryon won because of the book's positive message. In the Ages 7-10+ Category, Stewart Foster's *Check Mates* (Simon & Schuster, ISBN: 9781471172236) was praised for its sensitive portrayal of ADHD. In the Ages 11 to 14+ Category, both *Run, Rebel* (Penguin, ISBN: 9780241411421) by Manjeet Mann and *The Last Paper Crane* (Hot Key Books, ISBN: 9781471408472) by Kerry Drewery tied for the prize with their serious themes—one covered domestic abuse, one was about a Hiroshima bomb survivor. UKLA Judges considered Mann's and Drewery's works 'so exceptional', that both of their books received awards. *Run, Rebel* is profiled on page 10 of this issue. In the category of Information books for Ages 3- 14+, *The Undeclared* (Andersen, ISBN:978178344 described as 'both beautiful and important' with its uplifting poetic message by Kwame Alexander and Kadir Nelson carried the day. Of note, this book was awarded the American Library Association's Caldecott Medal for Illustration in 2020. Chris Lockwood, chair of the UKLA awards, said: "The UKLA is enormously proud of the commitment and resilience shown by our teacher judges... and of the stunningly diverse books which they have chosen as the winners. The quality of the judge's discussions were a privilege to witness."

Two weeks earlier, on 15 June, another prize-winning book received the UKLA Academic Award. *How and Why to Read and Create Children's Digital Books* (UCL Press, ISBN: 9781787353473) is bound to be helpful to teachers because it outlines effective ways of using digital books in early years and primary classrooms. Author Natalia Kucirkova offers insights into how smart toys and digital tools can enrich children's reading for pleasure by helping readers evaluate the quality of digital books. It also provides practical strategies for their use in the classroom, and promotes the value of storytelling while empowering teachers, parents, caregivers, and children's librarians.

My reading history BY EMMA ROGERS, SENIOR LECTURER IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

“For the true book worm, life doesn’t really begin until you get hold of your first book”
 -Mangan (2018), *Bookworm: A memoir of childhood reading*.

If, like Lucy Mangan, you would agree that life truly begins when you first hold a book, then my life truly began in 1976, when at age 3, the local Methodist church gifted me a copy of *My First Counting Book* (Lutterworth, ISBN: 071881598X) by Brenda Meredith Seymour. It seems extraordinary when I look back now that throughout the first 10 years of my life a local church gave me a book, carefully inscribed with my name and the date. Whoever wrote the book-plates each year, in the beautiful fountain-pen ink, hoped that the books would be cherished for a lifetime – and for me, they have been.



Books have always had a special place in my life, but it is only in recent years that I have begun to realise the role those books have played over the years in developing who I am not just as a reader, but as a person. In ‘Rivers of Reading’ (2010), Gabriel Cliff-Hodge reminds us that thinking about our readership in terms of our own social, temporal and historical narratives provides an opportunity to reflect on the texts that have made us who we are.

Take for example, the Enid Blyton books. I was a huge fan of the *Famous Five* series. You were either a *Famous Five* fan or a *Secret Seven* fan - you couldn’t be both. To me the decision was an easy one – the *Secret Seven* were nowhere near as feisty as good, old George and Timmy. Nor could I, as a working-class girl growing up in rural Lincolnshire, ever have been a fan of Blyton’s *Malory Towers*. It was altogether too posh for the likes of me. I had no interest whatsoever in reading books about girls who loved ponies, went to boarding school or wore pinafore dresses. The *Famous Five* series, however, became addictive. I was fortunate (I think!) to have parents that didn’t really check what time at night I switched off my light. So, many hours were spent with my heart-pounding, reading ‘just one more chapter’, to find out how Timmy would rescue George or whether they would find a way out of the cave. It seems extraordinary to me now that I raced to the end of each book with such hunger when, looking through adult eyes, I see that all of those books end in exactly the same way.

As I grew older, books began to play less of a role in my life. Through my teenage years, there seemed to be little available to me in the way of interesting books that enthralled me like those childhood books had done. At 17, I do remember a brief dalliance with Thomas Hardy. Introduced to his books through my A-level English Literature studies, I decided that reading, and more importantly, saying out loud that I was reading Thomas Hardy, gave me a certain gravitas and pretence. I read ‘proper’ literature, now. This was, no doubt, an attempt to ‘put the ways of childhood behind me’ and stake my claim as an adult reader. Similarly, in my university days, I became an avid fan of Margaret Atwood – a clear sign to all who saw me clutching *Surfacing* under my arm that not only was I a reader of literature, but also a feminist.

For me, what I was reading and how often I was reading has been closely linked with stages of my life. To quote Lucy Mangan again, ‘books made me who I am’. Not surprisingly, through my career as a primary school teacher I have found myself reading children’s books once again. This time, the challenges are not just to find a book that I really enjoy but also one that reflects the interests, identities and experiences of the children in the classes I was teaching and, latterly, to reach out to the student teachers to whom I’m passing on the reading baton.

Further reading:

Hodges, G. C. ‘Rivers of reading: using critical incident collages to learn about adolescent readers and their readership’, In *English in Education*, 2010, 44(3), 181–200.

Mangan, L. *Bookworm: a memoir of childhood reading*. Square Peg, 2018.

Teaching ‘knowledge about language’ more creatively

Reflecting on the award-winning *Outside Over There* which inspires poetry

BY ALISON TAYLOR, LECTURER IN SENI



Photos by Alison Taylor

I like writing of all types, but particularly creative writing and reflective writing. Reflective writing captures individual thoughts and values, and can offer a further structure to explore them in an illuminating way (Bolton, 2014). With the UK English curriculum emphasis on explicit knowledge of grammar and genre features (DfE, 2014) which influences the straight-forward, forgettably dry way language is often taught, I wondered whether creative teaching approaches could be a more engaging vehicle to impart information on language and literature. Children’s literature provided me with the inspiration for exploring how much ‘knowledge about language’ (KAL) can be taught through the creative exercise of writing poetry. Following an Elizabethan sonnet model, I was inspired by a favourite picture book to write a poem, *On Entering Into Outside Over There*, on the next page.

For this exercise, I chose Maurice Sendak’s intriguing book, *Outside Over There* (Penguin, ISBN: 9780099432920), as my starting point because its illustrations had an Elizabethan-era sensibility, and Sendak’s text was naturally rhythmic and enchanting. Additionally, this book has won several awards including the American Library Association’s 1982 Randolph Caldecott Medal for illustration. The multi-layered meanings within it provided me with the opportunity to ‘fill in the gaps’ with the implied meanings of the text and illustrations. Calling upon my previous life experiences, and my store of mental images from other books, I had no shortage of ideas of where this poem might go.

I began by writing down what I considered to be the main elements of the story. To these ideas I applied my conscious KAL relating to Elizabethan sonnets. Quickly, I learnt to manipulate an initial sentence to fit the rhythm of iambic pentameter, with its alternate ‘unstressed, stressed, unstressed, stressed’ five-beat rhythm, and by changing the word order or adding minor words. I positioned the first syllable of the key words to be stressed, keeping it consistent throughout the traditional fourteen lines which make up the three quatrains and couplet. Initially I decided each quatrain would cover one of three main stages of the story—first, the theft of the child; second, the pursuit and rescue of the child; and finally, the return journey home. Within this structure of these themes, the first three lines narrate the story and the fourth line expresses my own reaction to it. By the second and third quatrains, unanswered questions stylistically give the sonnet a mystery for the reader to reflect on. Sonnets have a very regular rhyme pattern; alternate lines through the quatrains (ABAB CDCD EFEF) and a matching rhyme in the couplet (GG). Therefore, the last word of each line left several options for rhymes.

In the poem, the story is abridged to its the most significant elements, economising words by leaving the reader to supply the unstated information. With Elizabethan sonnets, the three quatrains are often written in the past tense and the couplet in the present tense as a reflection on the quatrains. Following this model, my quatrains are in the past tense creating minor dissonance with the present tense of lines 11 and 12.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

To further conform to the Elizabethan sonnet's style, I selected certain words and conventions which reflected alliteration and assonance. For example, I used the word 'sweet' to begin each quatrain because it contrasted sharply with the undertones of fear. The conscious use of the word 'wonder', with reference to both the horn and my response, created a repetitive pattern carried through the poem's three quatrains.

Elizabethan sonnets open with rich imagery, and close with a direct message by the closing couplet. In my poem, lines 1 and 2 are linked through the use of 'discontented' and 'distraction', the negativity of the first quatrain reflecting my interpretation of Ida's feelings from the clues in the text and illustrations from *Outside Over There*.

The imagery in my sonnet is metaphorical and it represents the multi-layers of the *Outside Over There*. The poem's semiotic systems can be uncovered by applying Barthe's Codes (1970, cited in Fox, 1993). These five codes expand on the original text by filling in any 'gaps' with possible interpretations. Although this system is more appropriate to narrative, its application to my sonnet works because *Outside Over There* is a multi-layered story book. Often sonnets feature several dependent clauses and may even take the form of a single sentence. I used mostly main clauses with a coordinating clause at lines 2 and 10. I tried to use plenty of adjectives to create more vivid imagery, especially in the first quatrain. The other important change I made to the final draft was to personify the Wonderhorn by giving it a capital letter. Goblin and Changeling were also highlighted in this way as important elements.

I believe my intuitive ability to choose appropriate phrases and wording here, came from years of reading poetry and absorbing their themes and style. This poem displays my knowledge about language relating to Elizabethan sonnets and multi-layered reading of literature. Furthermore, I had the bonus of creatively engaging with a specific task that I can take forward with students.

Further Reading:

Bolton, G. *Reflective Practice*. Sage, 2014.

Department for Education. *The National Curriculum in England: Complete Framework for Key Stages 1 to 4*. Department for Education, 2014.

Fox, C. *At the Very Edge of the Forest*. Cassell, 1993.

Sendak, M. *Outside Over There*. Harper Collins, 1989.

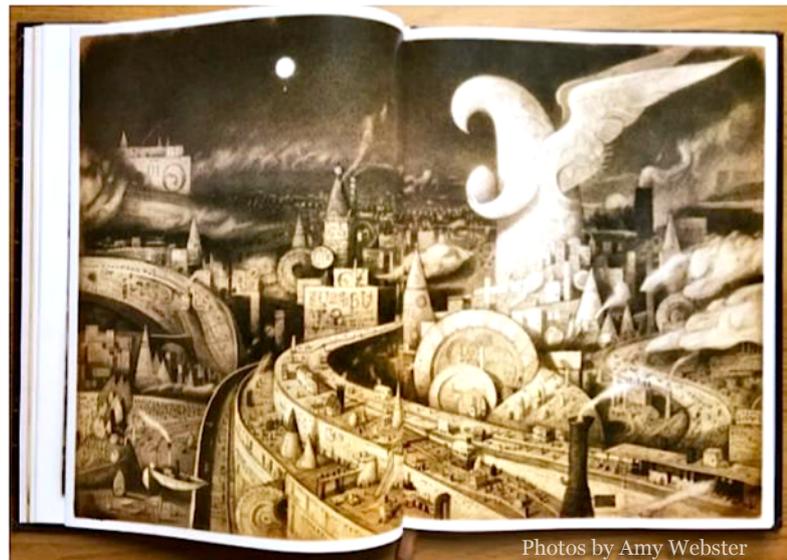
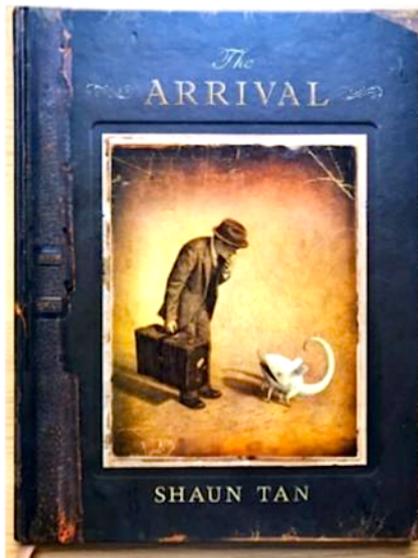
On Entering Into Outside Over There.

BY ALISON TAYLOR

1. *Sweet Wonderhorn of discontented mind,*
2. *Distraction from the changeling's icy stare.*
3. *A raging ocean signified your find,*
4. *I tried to warn you, Goblins had been there.*
5. *Sweet Sister stolen into dreams of night*
6. *Through lands of future, scenes of past and then*
7. *Found Goblin babes who wined and wailed in fright,*
8. *I wonder if deceit you sensed within?*
9. *Sweet Wonderhorn did play your haunting tune,*
10. *As senseless Goblins danced into the stream*
11. *Glad sisters hurried home to be safe soon*
12. *I wonder are things not all that they seem?*
13. *If for a Sibling's safety do you fear*
14. *Be watchful now, for Goblins may be near.*

Shaun Tan's Wondrous Wordless Worlds

BY AMY WEBSTER, SENIOR LECTURER IN EDUCATION



Photos by Amy Webster

Last year the Australian artist and author Shaun Tan became the first person of colour to win the prestigious CILIP Kate Greenaway medal for *The Arrival*. (Hachette, ISBN: 9780734415868) Previously, in 2011, Tan had also won the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award for his contribution to children's and young adult literature. Tan's work spans illustrated short stories such as *Tales from the Inner City* (Walker, ISBN: 9781406383843), picture books like *The Rules of Summer* (Walker, ISBN: 9781444908893) and *The Lost Thing* (Murray, ISBN: 9781473635487) before the wordless graphic novel, *The Arrival*.

Wordless books are (and continue to be) a new and rather daunting genre for me. My own research focuses on children's 'classics', a term that historically has been applied to works with a dominant verbal component such as Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* or Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*. The works may have iconic illustrations, but these are tied to the written text and are often appreciated because of that text's status—rather than being the reason for this status. The absence of a substantial amount of verbal text in wordless books also means that the reader is required to take on an active and quite demanding role. Rather than simply reading the verbal and visual texts, they become 'the narrator' (Salisbury and Styles, 2012, p. 97) and a 'participant in the creation of meanings' (Rowe, 1996, p. 221)—an intimidating but also exciting prospect.

Tan's wordless work *The Arrival* has won several, generally less well-known awards, which is possibly a reflection of the ties that literary awards tend to have to a written text (or at least some written text). It is a work that I would also give an award to for the important story that it tells and the imaginative, innovative way in which it tells this tale. The work depicts an immigrant's arrival in an imaginary land which is both familiar and strange in its landscapes, objects, language and ways of life, and the process of becoming acclimatised to a new home. There are darker moments (physically and figuratively) of flashbacks that depict the danger that drove the man from his home as he shares his experiences with other refugees. The tale finishes on a happier note when the man's family join him to start their new life together in the land that becomes their home. A muted colour palate is used throughout the book that draws heavily on sepia tones and shades of grey which gives the work the sense of an old-fashioned photograph album. The lack of comprehensible verbal language in the narrative means that the work is removed from any associations to a particular culture or group of people. Instead, it is a universal tale of immigration that conveys alienation, displacement, fear and hope; the book is the silent story of every migrant, every refugee, every displaced person who has had to leave their home and become acclimatised in an unfamiliar place. The absence of words and the use of a fantasy land also fosters empathy by placing the reader in the same position as all migrants entering a new country—we are all new arrivals in Tan's strange world.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)

For something lighter and visually brighter I would also recommend *The Rules of Summer*. This work features a few words on each double spread (right), but the richness is still to be found in the images where Tan continues to demonstrate his ability to construct and convey wondrous, wordless, worlds.



Further Reading

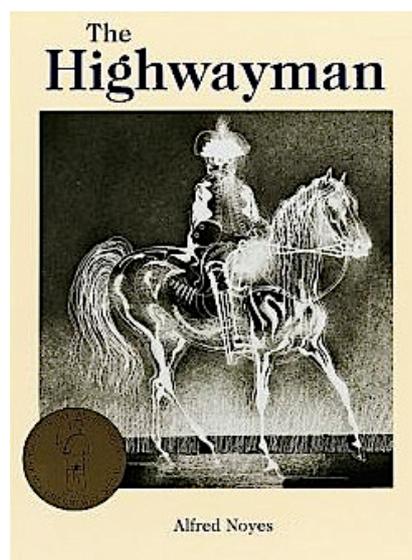
Rowe, A. 'Voices Off. Reading wordless picture books.' In M. Styles, E. Bearne and V. Watson (Eds.), *Voices Off. Texts, Contexts and Readers*, pp. 219-235). Cassell, 1996.

Salisbury, M. and Styles, M. *Children's picturebooks: the art of visual storytelling*. Laurence King, 2012.

The Highwayman by Alfred Noyes and illustrated by Charles Keeping

BY ALISON TAYLOR, LECTURER IN SENI

Winner of the Kate Greenaway Medal in 1981 for distinguished illustration in a book for children, this is a picture book story based upon a poem written in 1906. It tells of an 18th Century love affair between a highwayman and an innkeeper's daughter. When King George's men lay an ambush, the highwayman avoids capture when his love takes extreme action to warn him.

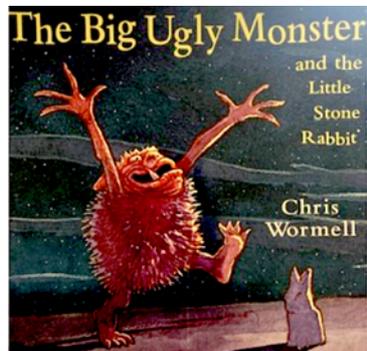


The artistry of *The Highwayman* (Oxford University Press, ISBN: 9780192723703) heightens our sense of ourselves as people who feel, consider and reflect. Love, unrequited love, and the darker side of human nature are laid bare through Charles Keeping's haunting illustrations, demanding we share closely in the emotions of each moment. This is an extraordinary example of a poem with unfolding events that leave little room to hide, challenging the notion that the picture story books are for readers of a young age. Despite the strong and subversive content, there are no consequences for our lives in the real world. However, the illustrations force a powerful interaction with the tale causing the reader to feel, consider and reflect to great extent. When I used this book with a class of 35 children in Year 5, it transformed their view of literature, demonstrating the value of the picture story book for all ages.

The Big Ugly Monster and the Little Stone Rabbit by Chris Wormell

BY ELLA FERN TUXFORD, PHD STUDENT AND EYFS (EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE) TEACHER

When I was first reading this book with my children, I thought how beautiful the illustrations were and how much discussion I would get about morals and the importance of being kind in life.



As I read further on, I felt an overwhelming sadness as I realised how this story was going to end, not the way children's books normally end, with all problems resolved and everybody happy but with a depth of tragedy. I wondered how my children would respond to this ending and the sadness of the story but, as ever they took on board the information and began to tell me the importance of being kind and caring in life to everyone no matter what they look like.

So, *Big Ugly Monster*,* despite your sadness my children insist on reading your story at least once a week – a firm favourite and **We** love you very much!

Run, Rebel by Manjeet Mann is my top pick of the CILIP Carnegie Medal shortlist

BY ANGELA WADDELL, LIBRARY ASSISTANT

As a runner myself, I could imagine the pounding of Amber's feet on her stairs and on the racetrack as the rebel pulse that flowed through this story. Living on a council estate with her parents, Amber dreams of being an Olympic athlete. At school she runs on the racetrack, but at home she resorts to running up and down the stairs—a victim of her father's authoritarian rules. *Run, Rebel** is young adult novel written in verse about a girl looking for a way to start a revolution in her life. She can't tell her friends exactly what goes on at home and she can't explain to her teachers why she's not allowed to continue athletics training despite her love of running. Indeed, this is a powerful story about domestic violence, bullying, and female struggle against the patriarchy.



No matter how small or quiet I am expected to be, I find my voice on the running track. It's where I am truly alive (p. 11).

Mann's skilful characterisation of Amber talks of her 'Terror, Terror, TERROR' (p. 49) and 'a silent anger' (p. 152)—the stifling tension of loving, fearing and rebelling against her father. And then there is hope supplied through the PE teacher that secretly gifts Amber a pair of trainers. I've read most of the 2021 Carnegie Medal shortlist, and this uniquely written book is one of my favourites. I'm glad it won the Showers's Choice Award for 2021 and a UKLA Award, too.

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini

BY NICOLE MCGARRELL, RFP AMBASSADOR/PGCE STUDENT

I read *A Thousand Splendid Suns** during the first lockdown after it was sent to me by a friend. It won of the 2008 Book Sense Award for adult fiction, now known as the Indies. It's a moving story, about growing up in Afghanistan, told from the perspective of two girls from different generations—one's childhood occurs when the Communists ruled, the other one is raised under the Taliban regime. Author Khaled Hosseini's ability to portray this heart-wrenching story grips you to the end and provides insight into this country's history. I highly recommend this as a summer read.

**The Big Ugly Monster and the Stone Rabbit* (Random House, ISBN: 9780224070034); *Run, Rebel* (Penguin, ISBN: 10 9780241411421); *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (Bloomsbury, ISBN: 9781526604750)

The Girl Who Stole an Elephant:

A book by Nizrana Farook

BY SOPHIE LONGNEY, SENIOR LECTURER IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

This book* is a real page turner which is guaranteed to have even the most reluctant reader hooked from the start! It was a firm favourite with a previous Year 6 class of mine.

The main character, Chaya, is a courageous young heroine who makes so many awful decisions, yet all for the right reasons. She can be likened to a modern day Robin Hood: stealing from the rich to provide for the poor. Throughout the story, Chaya's antics cause her lots of trouble! Will she successfully escape the realm of the palace after daring to steal the queen's jewels? Will she be able to rescue her best friend from prison? With the help of the king's elephant, Chaya embarks on an exciting expedition through Sri Lanka's jungle—a heart-warming journey filled with culture, trickery, blossoming friendship and of course, adventure!



Photo by Sophie Longney

The author, Nizrana Farook, was born and raised in Sri Lanka herself. The beautiful landscape she calls home is intertwined so effortlessly – powerful imagery oozes from every page which really brings the story alive. It is no surprise to me that this novel was one of the long-list titles

selected for the Blue Peter Book Awards in 2020—it's one not to be missed!

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

BY IRIS, YEAR 4 PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT

(Warning: a few spoilers.) I have just finished reading this book by J.K. Rowling. It is the third one in the *Harry Potter* series. Compared to the first two books, it is much better. The plot is more complex. For example, we go to Hogsmeade Village, just outside of Hogwarts school, because Harry and his friends visit it on special occasions. It's a village only for wizards. There is a new magical item called the Marauder's Map, which is a tool to see people around Hogwarts school. It is a bit creepy because you can probably use it to spy on people or older students like Percy sneaking around to see his girlfriend, Penelope. They probably go off to kiss—ugh!

We meet a new character, Sirius Black, and we think he is just a criminal until we learn about his backstory. We meet a new teacher, Professor Lupin, who is by far one of the best teachers, ever! His Defence Against the Dark Arts lessons sounded fun and all the students, especially Harry, learn a lot of magic from him, more than the previous two teachers. We meet a new magical creature name Buckbeak, who is a Hippogriff. Hippogriffs are magical creatures with the front legs, wings, and head of a giant eagle, but have the body, hind legs and tail of a horse. We also learn that some witches and wizards can transform themselves into animals whenever they want. They are called 'Animagus'. We already met one before, Professor McGonagall, who has been teaching Harry. She can turn into a cat. But in this book, we learn that being an Animagus is something special. I also like that in this book, a very mean person, Aunt Marge, gets justice. She gets blown up (like a balloon). We also get to see a person turn into a werewolf. I like wolves, so that scene was amazing.

I rate this book 9 out of 10 ten, but wonder if the next book is even better? But *Prisoner of Azkaban** does deserve an award because it's really good.



Photo by Rose Roberto

**The Girl Who Stole the Elephant* (Nosy Crow, ISBN: 9781788006347); *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Bloomsbury, ISBN: 9781408855676)

Child of St Kilda written by Beth Waters

BY MARY-LOUISE MAYNES, SENIOR LECTURER IN EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES

For a long time in the UK, children's non-fiction books were not accorded their own book award, but thankfully this is changing and there are now several awards just for factual books for children. One of the most recent ones is the United Kingdom Literacy Association Information Book Award, and class teachers were invited last summer to choose a winner based on a shortlist of 6 diverse and creative texts. My favourite was Beth Waters' *Child of St Kilda* (Child's Play Intl., ISBN: 9781786281876) which is about the remote Scottish islands of St Kilda, told through the story of Norman John Gilles, one of the last children to be born on the island of Hirta in 1925, and who lived there until the entire population was moved to the mainland in 1930. There is such a lot to enjoy about this beautiful book: the poignant story of how a whole way of life had to be abandoned; the account of a child who left one 'world' for another; the wildlife glimpsed through pages from Beth's sketchbook (she was lucky enough to be able to visit when writing the book) and her deceptively simple mono-print illustrations.

The book was 'highly commended' in the awards—the top prize went to *Counting on Katherine* (Pan Macmillan, ISBN: 9781529005615) by Helaine Becker, a worthy winner but it was not my first choice. This reminded me that no matter how good a book is, book awards are always subjective decisions, and when recommending a book to others (as I am doing now) whether adults or children, we should prepare ourselves for them to respond to it differently.

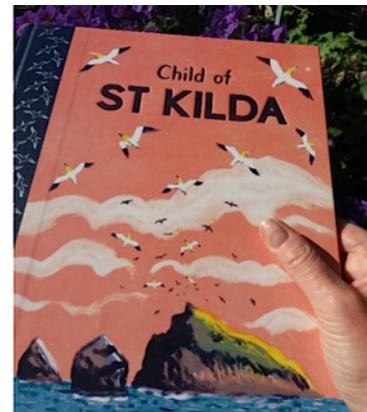


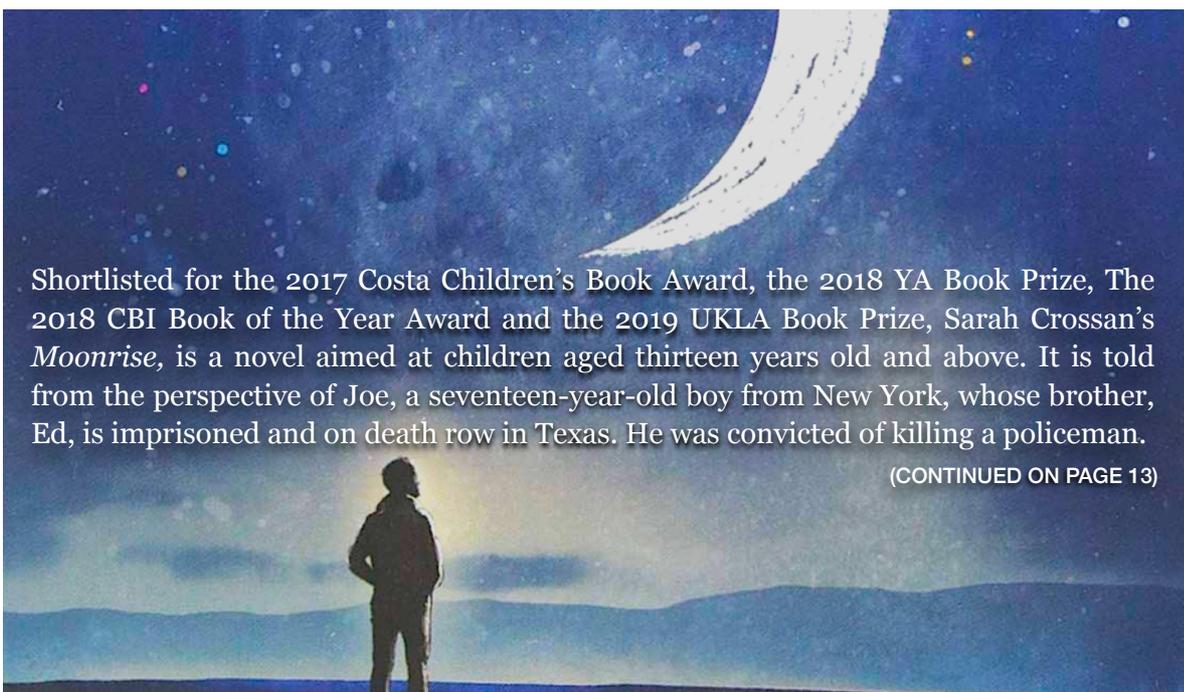
Photo by Mary-Louise Maynes

Moonrise and the fantasy of death

BY EDWARD COLLYER, PHD STUDENT

Shortlisted for the 2017 Costa Children's Book Award, the 2018 YA Book Prize, The 2018 CBI Book of the Year Award and the 2019 UKLA Book Prize, Sarah Crossan's *Moonrise*, is a novel aimed at children aged thirteen years old and above. It is told from the perspective of Joe, a seventeen-year-old boy from New York, whose brother, Ed, is imprisoned and on death row in Texas. He was convicted of killing a policeman.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 13)



Detail image of *Moonrise* book cover, by Rose Roberto

‘The way *Moonrise* deals with death is unique but startling.’

Moonrise (Bloomsbury, ISBN: 9781408867815) is symptomatic of a society where death is not discussed or dealt with openly. Instead, death is constructed as a fantasy in the mind of the protagonist, Joe. Academic exploration of *Moonrise* is warranted. Poling and Hupp (2008) contend that it is vital for there to be an availability of resources that start conversations with children about death as it often causes anxiety and the concept of death can often be misunderstood by children.

Ed’s impending death pervades the entire narrative, yet the word ‘death’ is hardly ever mentioned in the book. Instead, Crossan tells us that Ed ‘got his date through’ with ‘date’ standing in as a metonym for his execution, symbolising Joe’s inability to accept that his brother is going to die. Prior to Ed’s execution, Joe acknowledges that if his sister, Angela, watches it, it will be ‘something she can never un-see, a movie that will play for the rest of her life.’ Joe fears the lasting mental and emotional impact that seeing Ed’s death will have on him. Indeed, when Ed is finally executed at the hands of the state, Joe cannot face being there. Instead, he imagines:

the strap-down team taking Ed from his holding cell to his death chamber, the murmurings of the priest’s final prayer [...] Ed, IVs in his arms, head shaved, body fastened down, too tight for him to move. And there’s Phillip Miller nodding, giving the go ahead for poisons to be pumped into Ed’s body. (pp. 361-362)

Whilst Joe does have an idea of what his brother faces, it is also a construction of Joe’s imagination, a fantasy constructed by him as an unreliable narrator. As readers, we are positioned as outsiders in the same way that Joe deliberately positions himself as an outsider, preferring to stand outside the prison and ‘stare at the moon’ instead of witnessing Ed’s execution. However, we feel empathy for Joe’s choice not to witness his brother’s last moments. Instead, the first-person narration allows us to sympathise with Joe’s situation. His disturbing thoughts of a death chamber, final prayers and the poisons being ‘pumped into Ed’s body’ are all examples of graphic, morbid imagery. Yet he does not know the extent to which this actually happened; it is all constructed within his imagination. Crossan advocates a more open discussion of death; the real victim we see is Joe. We are not a witness to Ed’s death, neither is Joe, yet he is so tortured by his own thoughts and anxieties around exactly what death will entail, that we are left to wonder whether it would have been better had Joe faced up to his brother’s fate and accepted his death at the earliest possible juncture.

The novel itself raises questions about how best to approach the concept of death, in the classroom. Do we just accept—in the way the novel represents—that, in the 21st century, death appears to happen behind closed doors, away from those it will affect most and seek new ways manage well-being within this paradigm? Or do we seek to change how we approach death and foster openness about dying, in the classroom? *Moonrise* could be used as a starting point to address the benefits of discussing death openly.

Further Reading

Crossan, S. *Moonrise*. Bloomsbury, 2017.

Poling, D., & Hupp, J. ‘Death Sentences: A Content Analysis of Children’s Death Literature.’ *In The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 2008, pp. 165-176

Black History Month Events, October 2021

In honour of Black History Month the BGU Library will have a series of book displays and will have book bags related to diversity available for PGCE Primary and Secondary Students to check out. Other events planned by the library are the following.

Themes of Exhibited Books

'British educators featuring Beryl Gilroy, author of *Black Teacher*'

Main foyer, BGU Library, from 1 October - 28 October

'Atlantic World contributions to British medicine and nursing'

Main library first floor display from 1 - 17 October

'Celebrating black women's contributions to arts and culture'

Main library first floor display from 17 - 28 October

'Children's and YA poetry, fiction and picture books by awarding black authors'

TRC display from Friday 1 - 17 October

'Children's books featuring girls in the Sciences'

TRC display from Friday 17 - 28 October

Story Telling Events/ Live streaming

Story Telling in the Library for the Children of BGU Students and Staff

Tuesday 26 - Thursday 28 October — Details TBA via www.bishopg.ac.uk/bhm

Join a Book Club

Chaplaincy Book Club

The Chaplaincy book club meets once a term to discuss a book chosen by one of its participants. BGU staff as well as students and their friends and family are welcome to join. The next book for discussion is *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury, at **7pm on Friday, 15th October, 2021**

Please contact: chaplaincy@bishopg.ac.uk if you're interested in joining us.

There are no limitations on the type of book – poetry or prose, fiction or non-fiction, text or graphic. The only rule is that none of the participants selecting a book should have read it before. All meetings, (depending on COVID limitations) will take place at the Chaplain's House (near campus) and will be accompanied by light refreshments (including the offer of a glass of wine). There is no charge to join or participate – but please RSVP so that we can cater accordingly.

The Book Zone Trainee Teacher Club is coming to BGU

Organised by RfP (Reading for Pleasure) student ambassadors, Nicole McGarell and Emma Dexter, this book club aims to meet monthly, alternatively in the BGU Library and online. BGU student teachers as well as other interested students are welcome. More information will be coming in the October *Four Corners* issue. Please tweet any questions to Emma @MissGibbs15.

Does children's literature interest you?

Check out the BGU course:

MA in Children's Literature and Literacies

www.bishopg.ac.uk/courses/childrensliterature



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