

20+ Children's Books That Discuss Race and Racism

By [Sara Barnes](#) on June 4, 2020

Books are a powerful tool for learning about diverse perspectives. While we might think of these types of books as being for older people, no one is too young to engage with texts that start important conversations about race and racism. If you're a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle—anyone that regularly interacts with children—there are a myriad of great children's books filled with vibrant and engaging illustrations that cover these topics in a way that is accessible for kids. But where do you start? In a now-viral Twitter thread, educator [Brittany Smith shared her favorite books](#) to have in her classroom.

Smith's selections both educate on and celebrate diversity. Some cover historical figures, such as the book *Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History* by Vashti Harrison. Others broach topics that have profound effects on children. *Maddi's Fridge* raises awareness about poverty and hunger while *My Family Divided* is based on actor Diane Guerrero's personal story of her undocumented immigrant parents' deportation.

Scroll down for Smith's picks. And for even more suggestions, visit Twitter to see what other people [recommended in their replies](#).

Educator Brittany Smith shared her favorite children's books dealing with race and racism.



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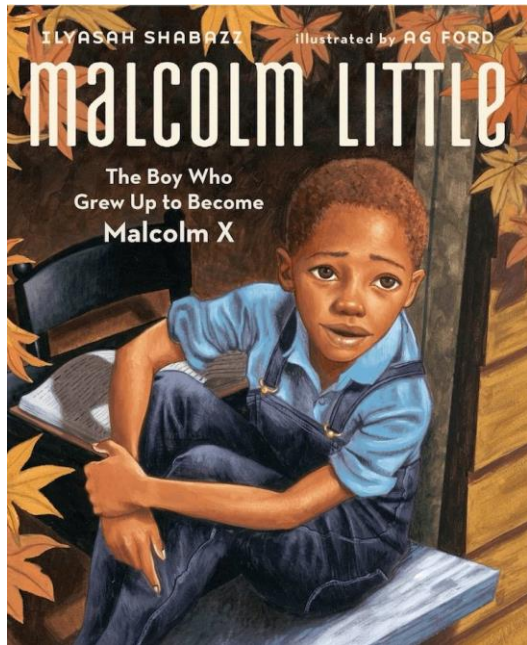
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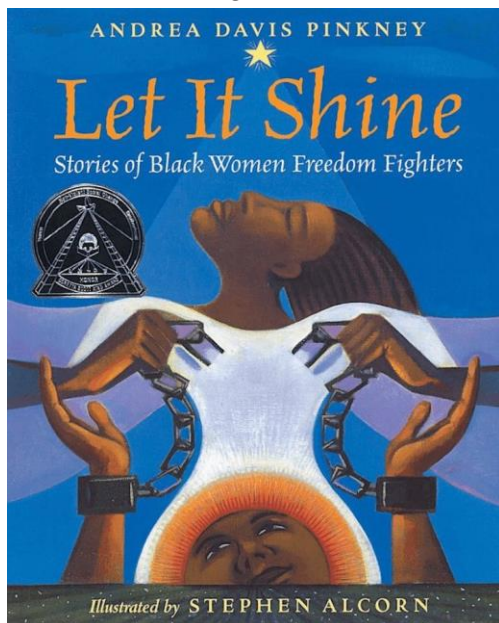
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MALCOLM LITTLE: THE BOY WHO GREW UP TO BECOME MALCOLM X WRITTEN BY ILYASAH SHABAZZ AND ILLUSTRATED BY AG FORD



LET IT SHINE: STORIES OF BLACK WOMEN FREEDOM FIGHTERS WRITTEN BY ANDREA DAVIS PINKNEY AND ILLUSTRATED BY STEPHEN ALCORN



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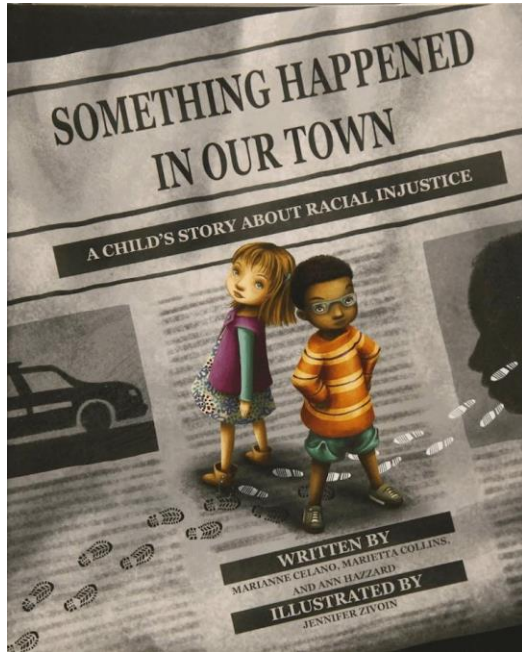
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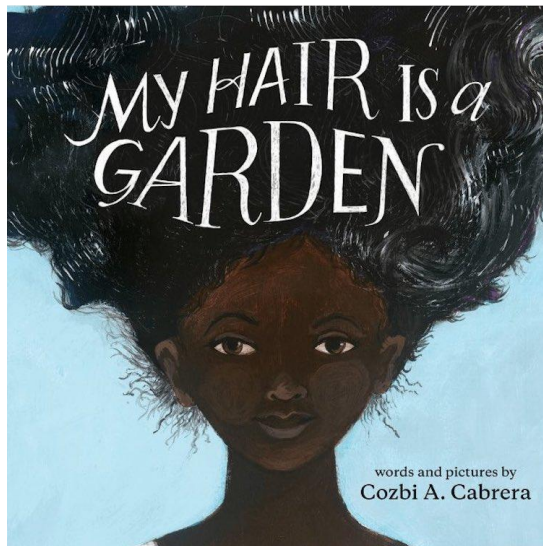
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SOMETHING HAPPENED IN OUR TOWN: A CHILD'S STORY ABOUT RACIAL INJUSTICE WRITTEN BY MARIANNE CELANO, MARIETTA COLLINS, AND ANN HAZZARD AND ILLUSTRATED BY JENNIFER ZIVOIN



MY HAIR IS A GARDEN BY COZBI A. CABRERA



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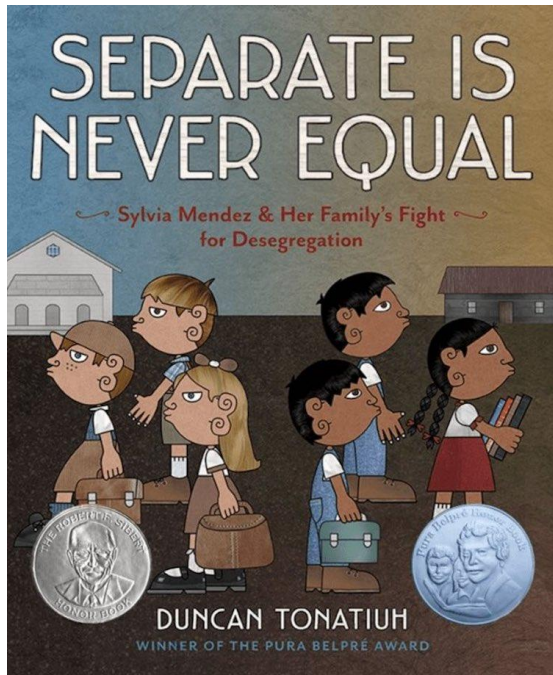
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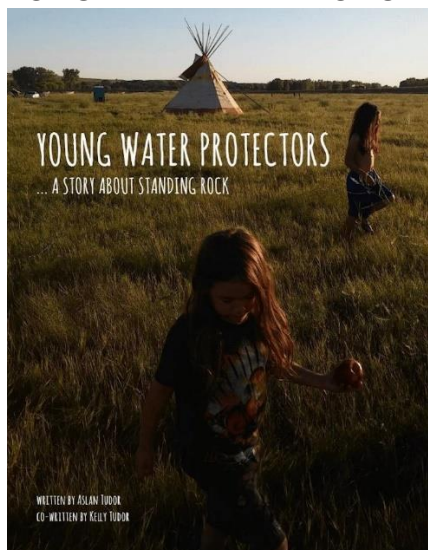
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SEPARATE IS NEVER EQUAL: SYLVIA MENDEZ AND HER FAMILY'S FIGHT FOR DESEGREGATION BY DUNCAN TONATIUH



YOUNG WATER PROTECTORS: A STORY ABOUT STANDING ROCK BY ASLAN TUDOR AND KELLY TUDOR



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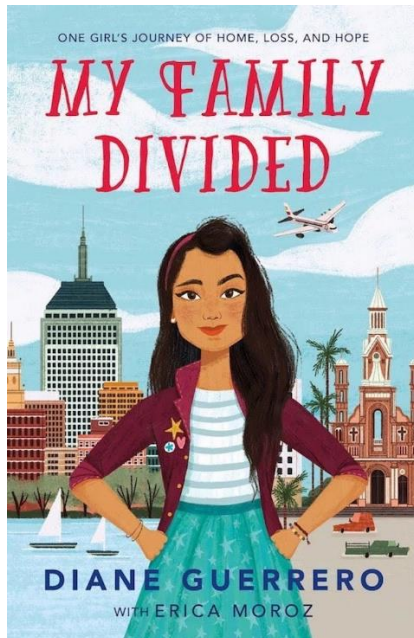
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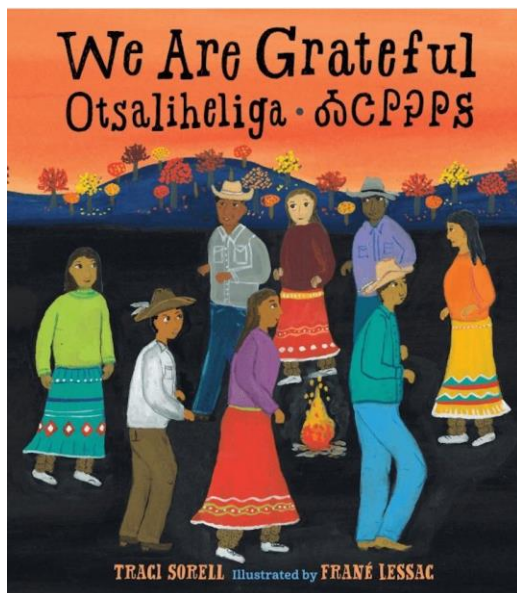
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***MY FAMILY DIVIDED: ONE GIRL'S JOURNEY OF HOME, LOSS, AND HOPE* BY DIANE GUERRERO AND ERICA MOROZ**



***WE ARE GRATEFUL: OTSALIHELIGA* WRITTEN BY TRACI SORELL AND ILLUSTRATED BY FRANÉ LESSAC**



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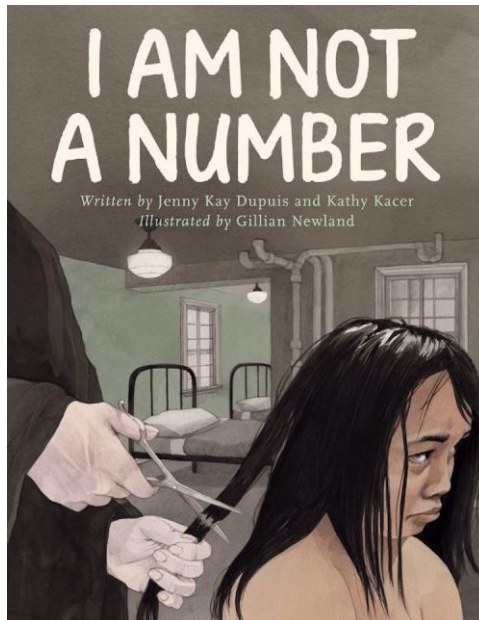
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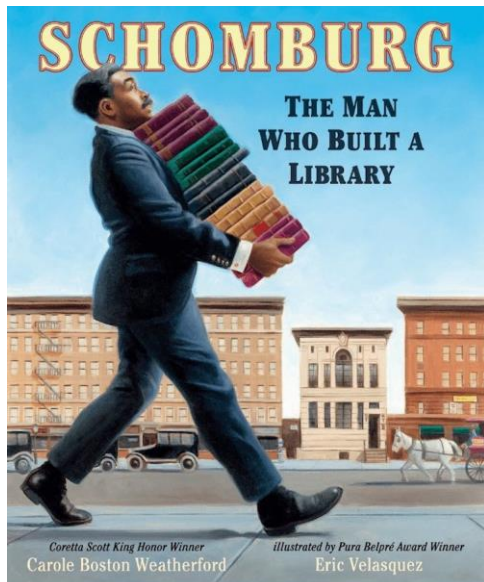
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I AM NOT A NUMBER WRITTEN BY JENNY KAY DUPUIS AND KATHY KACER AND
ILLUSTRATED BY GILLIAN NEWLAND



SCHOMBURG: THE MAN WHO BUILT A LIBRARY WRITTEN BY CAROLE BOSTON
WEATHERFORD AND ILLUSTRATED BY ERIC VELASQUEZ



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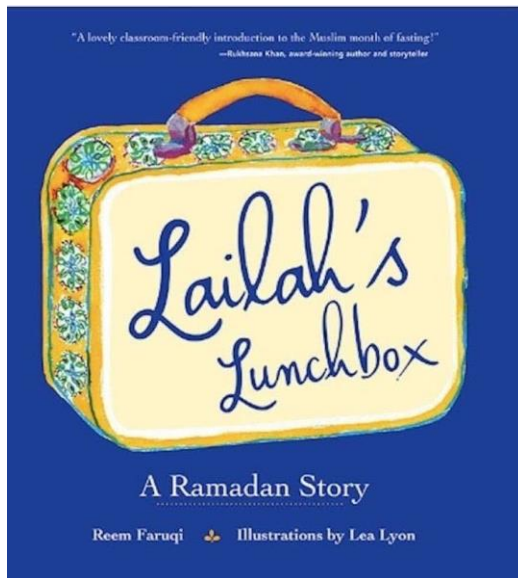
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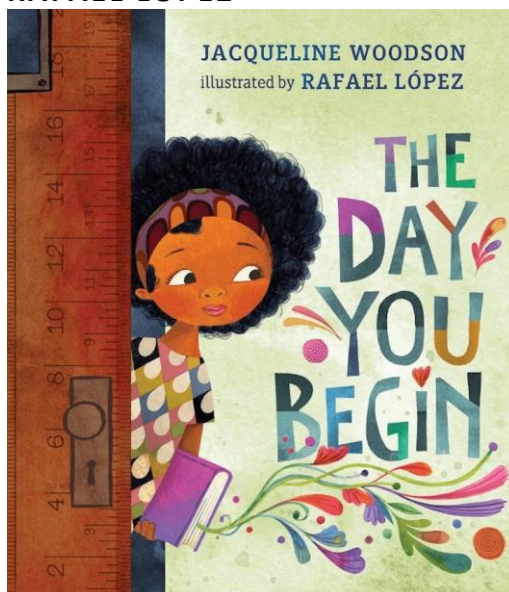
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LAILAH'S LUNCHBOX: A RAMADAN STORY WRITTEN BY REEM FARUQI AND
ILLUSTRATED BY LEA LYON



THE DAY YOU BEGIN WRITTEN BY JACQUELINE WOODSON ILLUSTRATED BY
RAFAEL LÓPEZ



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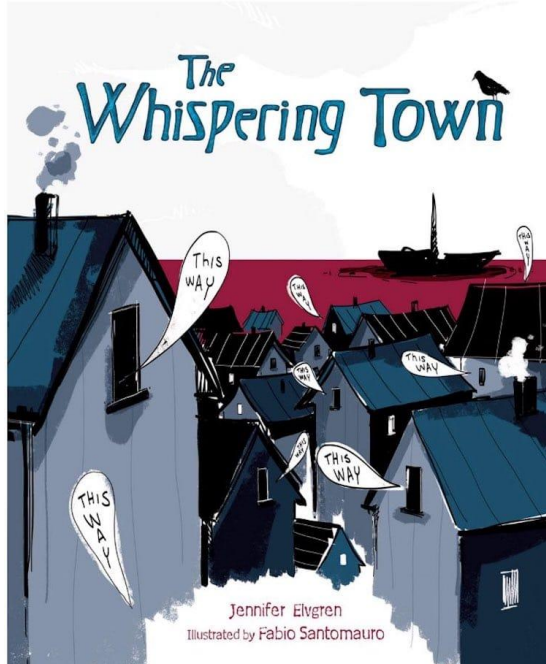
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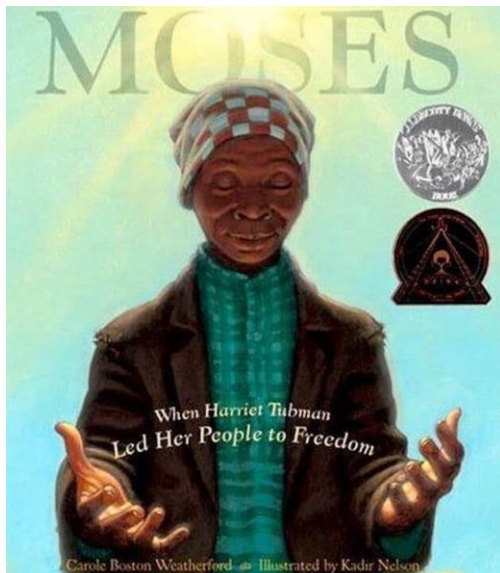
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THE WHISPERING TOWN BY WRITTEN BY JENNIFER ELVGREN AND
ILLUSTRATED BY FABIO SANTOMAURO



MOSES: WHEN HARRIET TUBMAN LED HER PEOPLE TO FREEDOM WRITTEN BY
CAROLE BOSTON WEATHERFORD AND ILLUSTRATED BY KADIR NELSON



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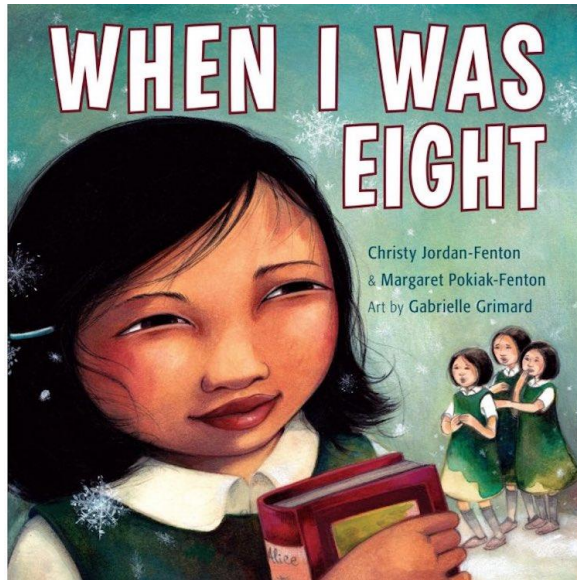
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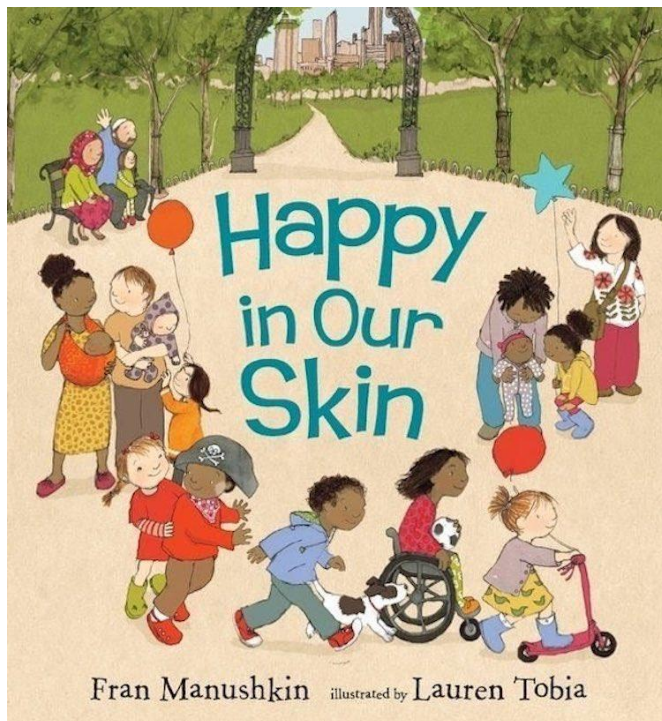
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WHEN I WAS EIGHT WRITTEN BY CHRISTY JORDAN-FENTON AND MARGARET POKIAK-FENTON AND ILLUSTRATED BY GABRIELLE GRIMARD



HAPPY IN OUR SKIN WRITTEN BY FRAN MANUSHKIN AND ILLUSTRATED BY LAUREN TOBIA



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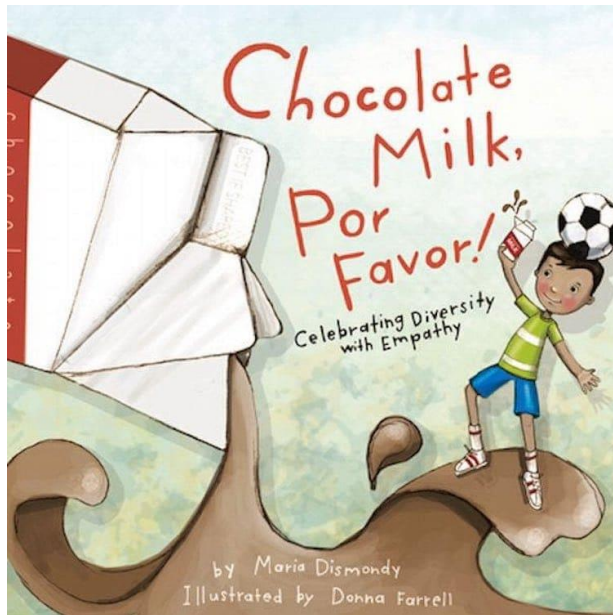


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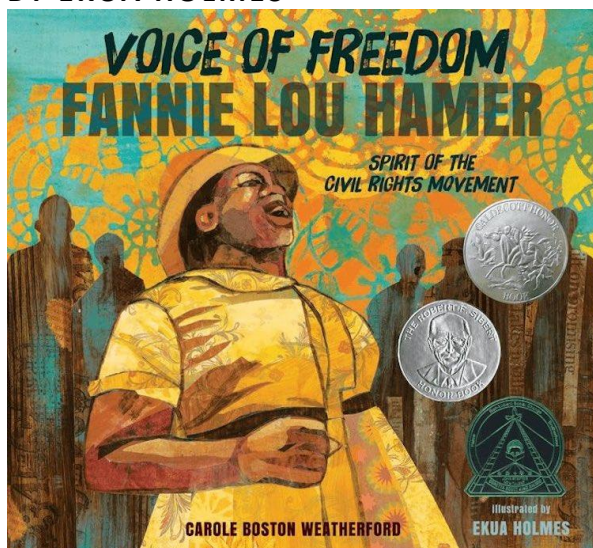
CHOCOLATE MILK, POR FAVOR: CELEBRATING DIVERSITY WITH EMPATHY

WRITTEN BY MARIA DISMONDY AND ILLUSTRATED BY DONNA FARRELL



VOICE OF FREEDOM: FANNIE LOU HAMER, SPIRIT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS

MOVEMENT WRITTEN BY CAROLE BOSTON WEATHERFORD AND ILLUSTRATED BY EKUA HOLMES



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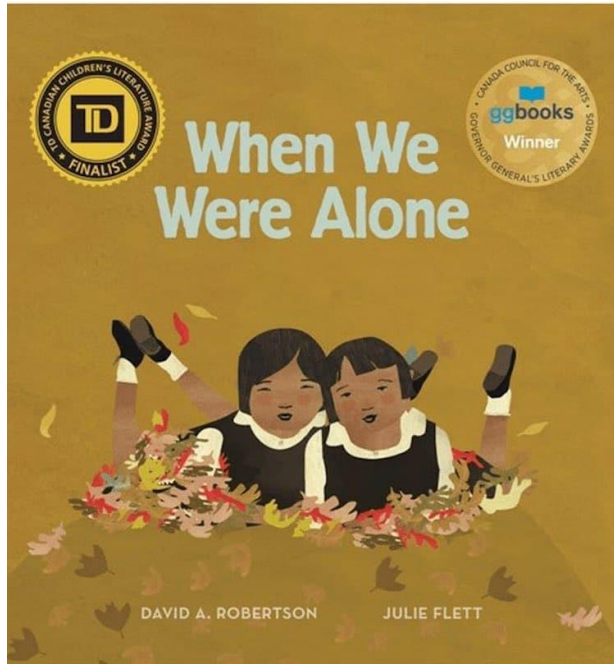
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WHEN WE WERE ALONE BY DAVID A. ROBERTSON AND JULIE FLETT



SHINING STAR: THE ANNA MAY WONG STORY BY PAULA YOO AND LIN WANG



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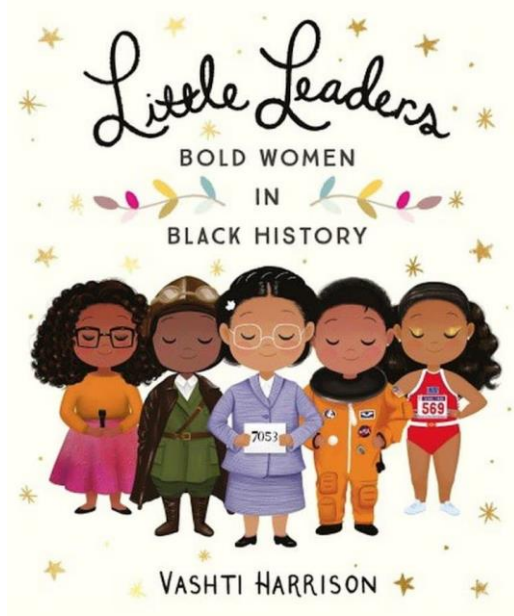
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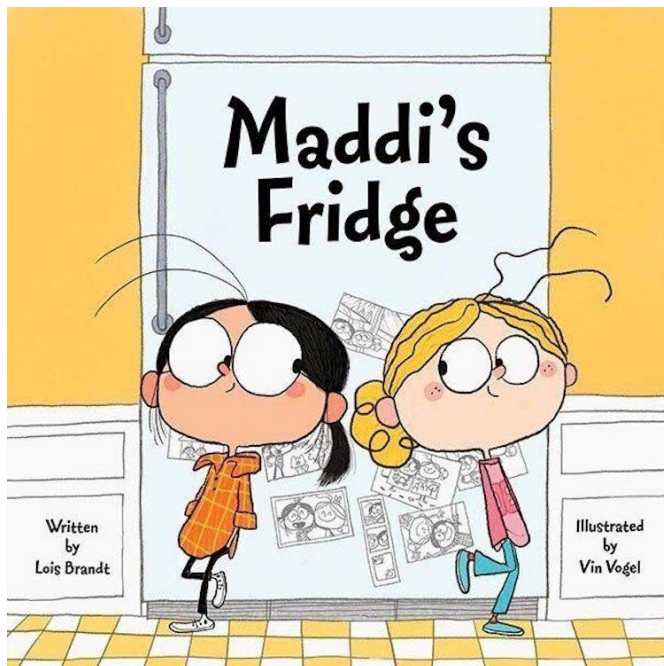
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LITTLE LEADERS: BOLD WOMEN IN BLACK HISTORY BY VASHTI HARRISON



MADDI'S FRIDGE WRITTEN BY LOIS BRANDT AND ILLUSTRATED BY VIN VOGEL



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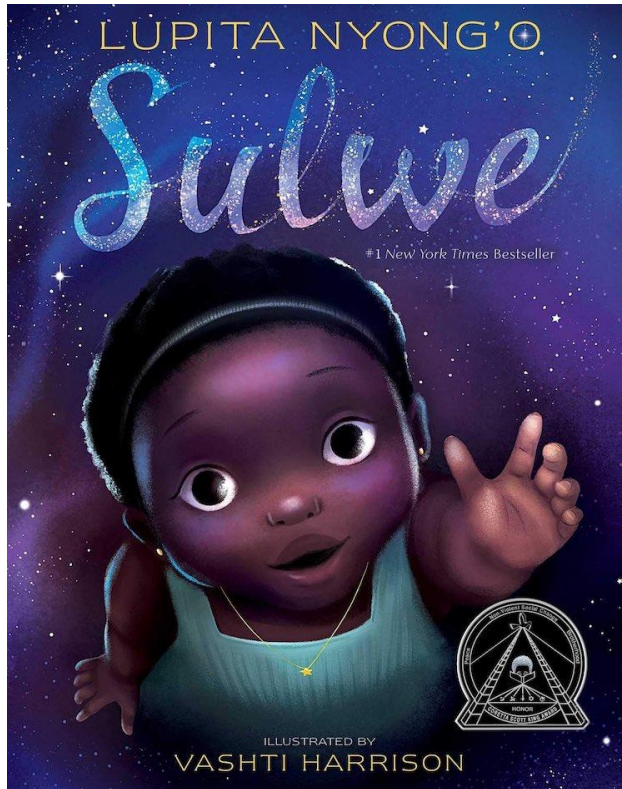
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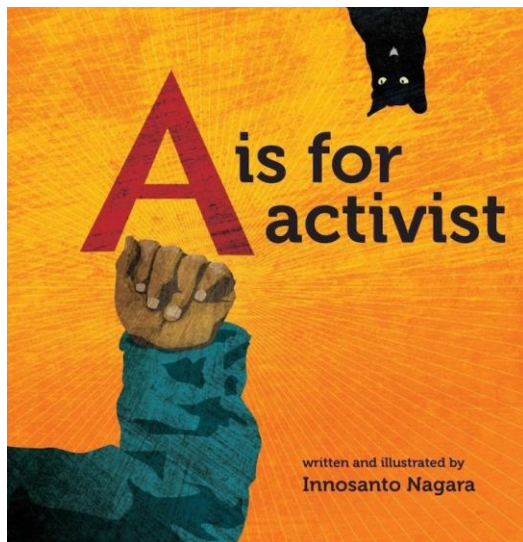
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SULWE WRITTEN BY LUPITA NYONG'O AND ILLUSTRATED BY VASHTI HARRISON



A IS FOR ACTIVIST BY INNOSANTO NAGARA



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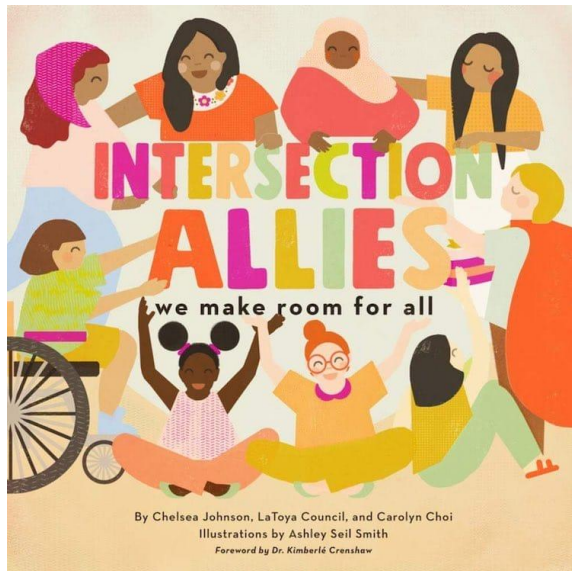
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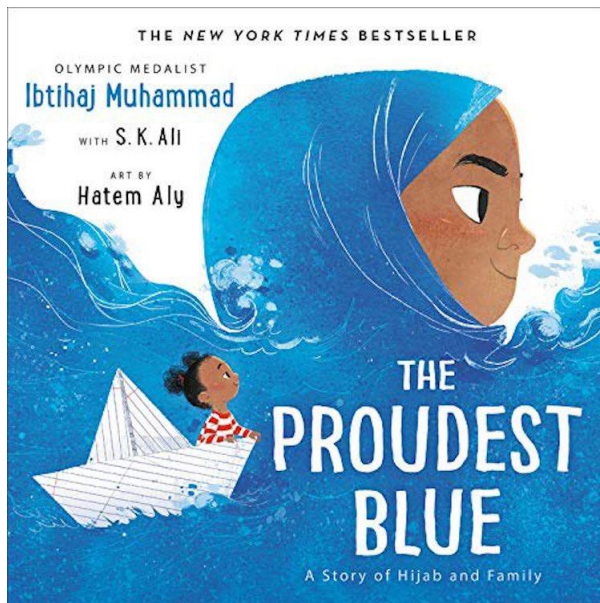
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INTERSECTION ALLIES: WE MAKE ROOM FOR ALL WRITTEN BY CHELSEA JOHNSON, LATOYA COUNCIL, AND CAROLYN CHOI AND ILLUSTRATED BY ASHLEY SEIL SMITH



THE PROUDEST BLUE: A STORY OF HIJAB AND FAMILY WRITTEN BY IBTIHAJ MUHAMMAD AND S.K. ALI AND ILLUSTRATED BY HATEM ALY



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h/t: [\[BuzzFeed\]](#)

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SARA BARNES

Sara Barnes is a Staff Editor at My Modern Met and Manager of [My Modern Met Store](#). As an illustrator and writer living in Seattle, she chronicles illustration, embroidery, and beyond through her blog [Brown Paper Bag](#) and Instagram [@brwnpaperbag](#). She wrote a book about embroidery artist Sarah K. Benning titled '[Embroidered Life](#)' that was published by Chronicle Books in 2019. Sara is a graduate of the Maryland Institute College of Art. She earned her BFA in Illustration in 2008 and MFA in Illustration Practice in 2013.

[Read all posts from Sara Barnes](#)



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