2018 ALSC Charlemae Rollins
President’s Program Resource Guide
Monday, June 25, 2018

Awards, best-of-the-year lists and reviews focus on "quality" and "excellence" in literature for
youth, but what do “quality” and “excellence” really mean in the canon of American literature for
children? Who is deciding which books stand out? How are some critics and some children
privileged in our field’s thinking? How are some dismissed or made invisible? What does
“American literature for children” even mean? What are common assumptions and current
discourse, and what it would look like if we truly considered all children as we evaluate books
and single out titles for distinction both within and beyond ALSC?

For this resource guide, the program panelists and moderator were each asked to share
suggested critical readings and 5 to 7 must-have books for libraries. We hope you find these
resources helpful.

**Panelists**

**Margarita Engle, Author** [http://www.margaritaengle.com/](http://www.margaritaengle.com/)
Margarita Engle is the 2017-2019 national Young People’s Poet Laureate, and a USBBY 2019 Astrid
Lindgren Award nominee. She is the Cuban-American author of many verse novels, including *The
Surrender Tree*, a Newbery Honor winner, and *The Lightning Dreamer*, a PEN USA Award recipient. Her
verse memoir, *Enchanted Air*, received the Pura Belpré Award, Golden Kite Award, Walter Dean Myers
Honor, Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award, and Arnold Adoff Poetry Award, among others. *Drum Dream
Girl* received the Charlotte Zolotow Award for best picture book text. Her newest books are *The Flying
Girl, How Aída de Acosta learned to Soar*, and *Jazz Owls, a Novel of the Zoot Suit Riots*. Pending
publication in September is a picture book titled *A Dog Named Haku, A Holiday Story From Nepal*, co-
authored with Amish and Nicole Karanjit. Margarita was born in Los Angeles, but developed a deep
attachment to her mother’s homeland during childhood summers with relatives. She studied agronomy
and botany along with creative writing. She lives in central California with her husband and his search and
rescue dogs.
Debbie Reese, Critic/Librarian/Scholar/Activist
https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/
Debbie Reese is tribally enrolled at Nambé Pueblo, a sovereign nation in what is currently northern New Mexico. Her book chapters, research, and professional articles on depictions of Indigenous peoples in children’s and young adult literature are taught in Education, Library Science, and English courses in the United States and Canada. A former schoolteacher and assistant professor, she has a master's and PhD in Education from the University of Illinois, and an MLIS from San Jose State University. She is a founder of the Native American House and the American Indian Studies programs at the University of Illinois, and a founding member of See What We See. She was selected to deliver the 2019 Arbuthnot Lecture.

Jason Reynolds, Author http://www.jasonwritesbooks.com/
Jason Reynolds is a New York Times bestselling author, a Newbery Award Honoree, a Printz Award Honoree, National Book Award Honoree, a Kirkus Award winner, a two time Walter Dean Myers Award winner, an NAACP Image Award Winner, and the recipient of multiple Coretta Scott King honors. Reynolds was the American Booksellers Association’s 2017 spokesperson for Indies First, and served as the national spokesperson for the 2018 celebration of School Library Month in April 2018, sponsored by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL). Jason’s many works of fiction include When I Was the Greatest, Boy in the Black Suit, All American Boys (co-written with Brendan Kiely), As Brave As You, For Every One, Miles Morales: Spider-Man, the Track series (Ghost, Patina, Sunny, and Lu), and Long Way Down, which received both a Newbery Honor and a Printz Honor. He is on faculty at Lesley University, for the Writing for Young People MFA Program and lives in Washington, DC.

Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, Professor/Critic/Scholar/Activist
Graduate School of Education, Penn State University
http://scholar.gse.upenn.edu/thomas
Ebony Elizabeth Thomas is an assistant professor in the Literacy, Culture, and International Education Division at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education. A former Detroit Public Schools teacher, Dr. Thomas's program of research is most keenly focused on children's and adolescent literature, the teaching of African American literature, and the role of race in English language arts classroom discourse and interaction. A past National Academy of Education/Spencer Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow and recipient of the AERA Language and Social Processes SIG Emerging Scholar Award, her forthcoming book is The Dark Fantastic: Race and the Imagination in Youth Literature, Media, and Culture (New York University Press). Along with Debbie Reese and K.T. Horning, she is the 2018 recipient of the Children’s Literature Association Honor Article Award.

Moderator: Edith Campbell, Critic/Librarian/Activist https://campbele.wordpress.com/
Edith Campbell is an assistant Education Librarian in the Cunningham Memorial Library at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, IN. She researches the visibility of Black girls in young adult literature. Edith is a founding member of the We The People Summer Reading List, and See What We See. She serves on the Advisory Board for the Research on Diversity in Youth Literature journal. She was a member of the 2018 Michael L. Printz Award Committee. In 2016, Edith served as a Faculty Fellow to the ISU Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence’s Multicultural Curriculum Learning Community. She is a past member of the WNDB Walter Award Committee, YALSA’s Best Fiction for Young Adults selection committee and the CYBILS Nonfiction Awards committee. She blogs at CrazyquitEdi. Edith received her B.A. in Economics from the University of Cincinnati and MLS from Indiana University.
Critical Readings:

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en


https://www.hbook.com/2010/03/authors-illustrators/decolonizing-imagination/#


Johnson, L. (2016). Students don’t need diverse literature just because it’s diverse. *Literacy & NCTE: The official blog of the National Council of Teachers of English.*


Critical Readings, continued


Reese, D. Are We “People of Color”? https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/p/we-are-not-people-of-color.html


**Blogs and Book review sites:**

American Indians in Children’s Literature https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/
Must-have books for every library (selected by our panelists):

- **Binti** by Nnedi Okorafor
- **Burn Baby Burn** by Meg Medina
- **Calling the Doves/Canto por las palomas** by Juan Felipe Herrera; illustrated by Elly Simmons
- **Crazy Horse’s Girlfriend** by Erika Wurth
- **The Crossover** by Kwame Alexander
- **Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut** by Derrick D. Barnes; illustrated by Gordon C. James
- **Dizzy in Your Eyes: Poems About Love** by Pat Mora
- **Each Kindness** by Jacqueline Woodson
- **George** by Alex Gino
- **The House on Mango Street** by Sandra Cisneros
- **If I Ever Get Out of Here** by Eric Gansworth

Must-have books for every library, continued

- **The Inexplicable Logic of My Life** by Benjamin Alire Sáenz
- **It Ain’t So Awful, Falafel** by Firoozeh Dumas
• Jingle Dancer by Cynthia Leitich Smith; illustrated by Ying-Hwa Hu and Cornelius Van Wright
• Kira-kira by Cynthia Kadohata
• The Marrow Thieves by Cherie Dimaline
• Marti’s Song for Freedom/Marti y sus versos por la libertad by Emma Otheguy; illustrated by Beatriz Vidal
• Monster by Walter Dean Myers
• Murder on the Red River by Marcie Rendon
• Out of My Mind by Sharon M. Draper
• Outrun the Moon by Stacey Lee
• The People Shall Continue by Simon J. Ortiz; illustrated by Sharol Graves
• Piecing Me Together by Renée Watson
• Poems to Dream Together/Poemas para soñar juntos by Francisco X. Alarcón; illustrated by Paula Barragán
• The Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo
• Saltypie by Tim Tingle; illustrated by Karen Clarkson
• Salvage the Bones by Jesmyn Ward
• Shadowshaper by Daniel José Older
• Somos como las nubes/We Are Like Clouds by Jorge Argueta; illustrated by Alfonso Ruano
• Tales of the Mighty Code Talkers edited by Arigon Starr
• The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas
• Trail of Lightning by Rebecca Roanhorse
• Under the Mesquite by Guadalupe Garcia McCall
• Water in May by Ismée Amiel Williams
• When We Play Our Drums, They Sing/Lucy & Lola by Richard Van Camp and Monique Gray Smith
• When We Were Alone by David A. Robertson; illustrated by Julie Flett
• You Bring the Distant Near by Mitali Perkins

And Don’t Forget Books BY Our Author Panelists!

By Margarita Engle:

*Also available in Spanish language edition

• All the Way to Havana. Illustrated by Mike Curato
• *Bravo! Poems about Amazing Hispanics. Illustrated by Rafael López
• A Dog Named Haku: A Holiday Story from Nepal by Margarita Engle, Amish Karanjit, and Nicole Karanjit. Illustrated by Ruth Jeyaveeran. (Forthcoming: September 2018)
• *Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl’s Courage Changed Music. Illustrated by Rafael López
• *Enchanted Air: Two Cultures, Two Wings: A Memoir
• The Firefly Letters: A Suffragette’s Journey to Cuba
- The Flying Girl: How Aida de Acosta Learned to Soar. Illustrated by Sara Palacios
- Forest World
- Hurricane Dancers: The First Caribbean Pirate Shipwreck
- Jazz Owls: A Novel of the Zoot Suit Riots. Illustrated by Rudy Gutierrez
- The Lightning Dreamer: Cuba’s Greatest Abolitionist
- Lion Island: Cuba’s Warrior of Words
- *Miguel’s Brave Knight: Young Cervantes and His Dream of Don Quixote. Illustrated by Raúl Colón
- *Morning Star Horse. Decorations by Josiah Muster
- Mountain Dog. Illustrated by
- Orangutanka: A Story in Poems. Illustrated by Renée Kurilla
- The Poet Slave of Cuba: A Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano
- Silver People: Voices from the Panama Canal
- The Sky Painter: Louis Fuertes, Bird Artist. Illustrated by Aliona Bereghici
- Summer Birds: The Butterflies of Maria Merian
- *The Surrender Tree: Poems of Cuba’s Struggle for Freedom (bilingual edition available)
- Tiny Rabbit’s Big Wish. Illustrated by David Walker
- Tropical Secrets: Holocaust Refugees in Cuba
- When You Wander: A Search-and-Rescue Dog Story. Illustrated by Mary Morgan
- The Wild Book

By Jason Reynolds:

- All American Boys (with Brendan Kiely)
- As Brave as You
- The Boy in the Black Suit
- For Every One
- Ghost (Book #1 of Track)
- Long Way Down
- Lu (Book #4 of Track) (Forthcoming: October 2018)
- My Name Is Jason (Mine, Too) by Jason Reynolds and Jason Griffin. Illustrated by Jason Griffin
- Miles Morales: Spider-Man
- Patina (Book #2 of Track)
- Sunny (Book #3 of Track)
- When I Was the Greatest