

CHILDREN'S BOOKS RECOMMENDATIONS

These books will help facilitate conversations about empathy, diversity, challenging stereotypes and building empathy....

All of which are critical for ending violence and building the world we all want to live in!



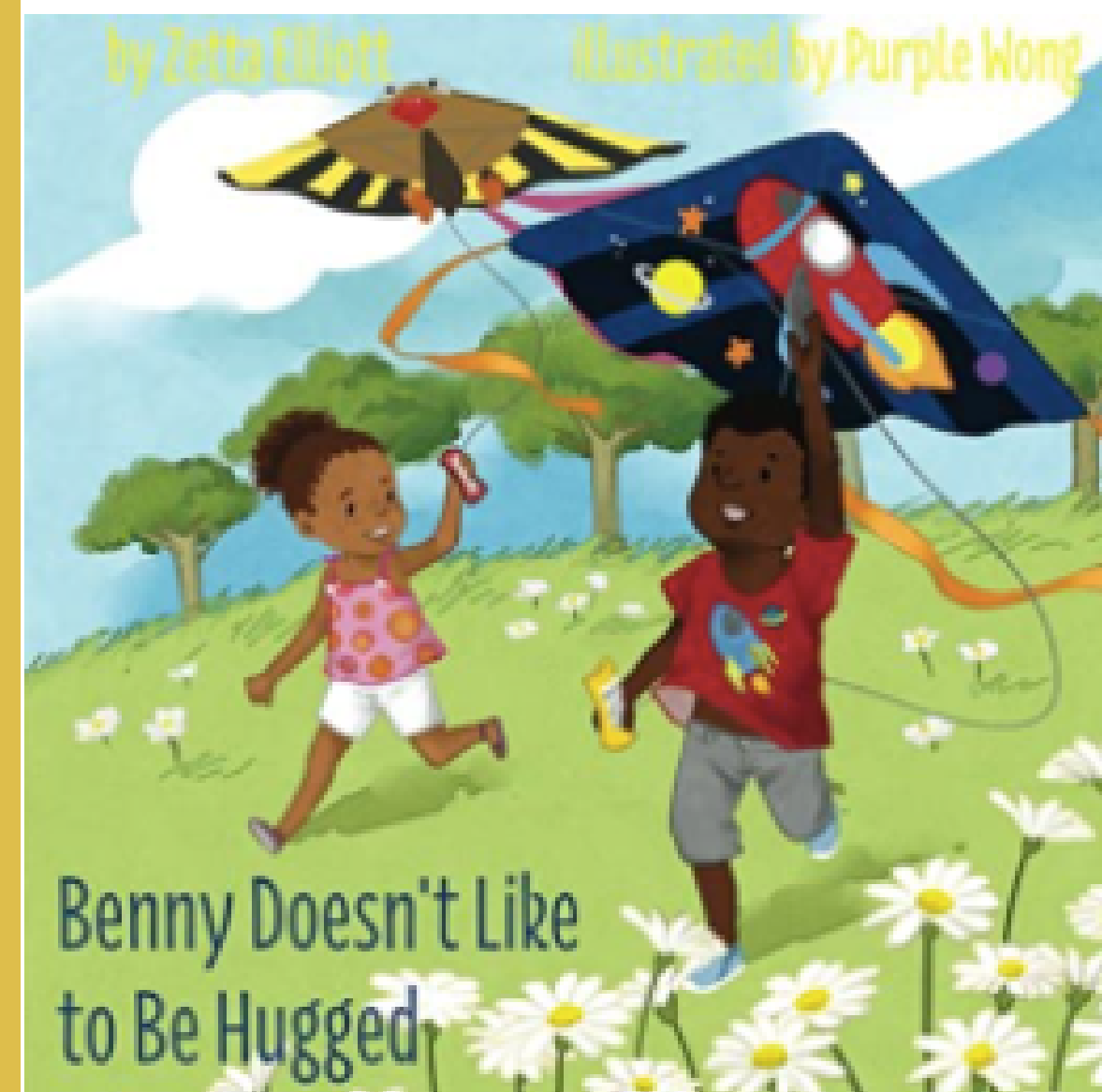
IowaCASA

Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Benny Doesn't Like To Be Hugged

By Zetta Elliott

A little girl uses rhyming verse to describe the unique traits of her autistic friend. Benny likes trains and cupcakes without sprinkles, but he can also be fussy sometimes. The narrator doesn't mind, however, because "true friends accept each other just the way they are." A gentle story encouraging children to appreciate and accept our differences.

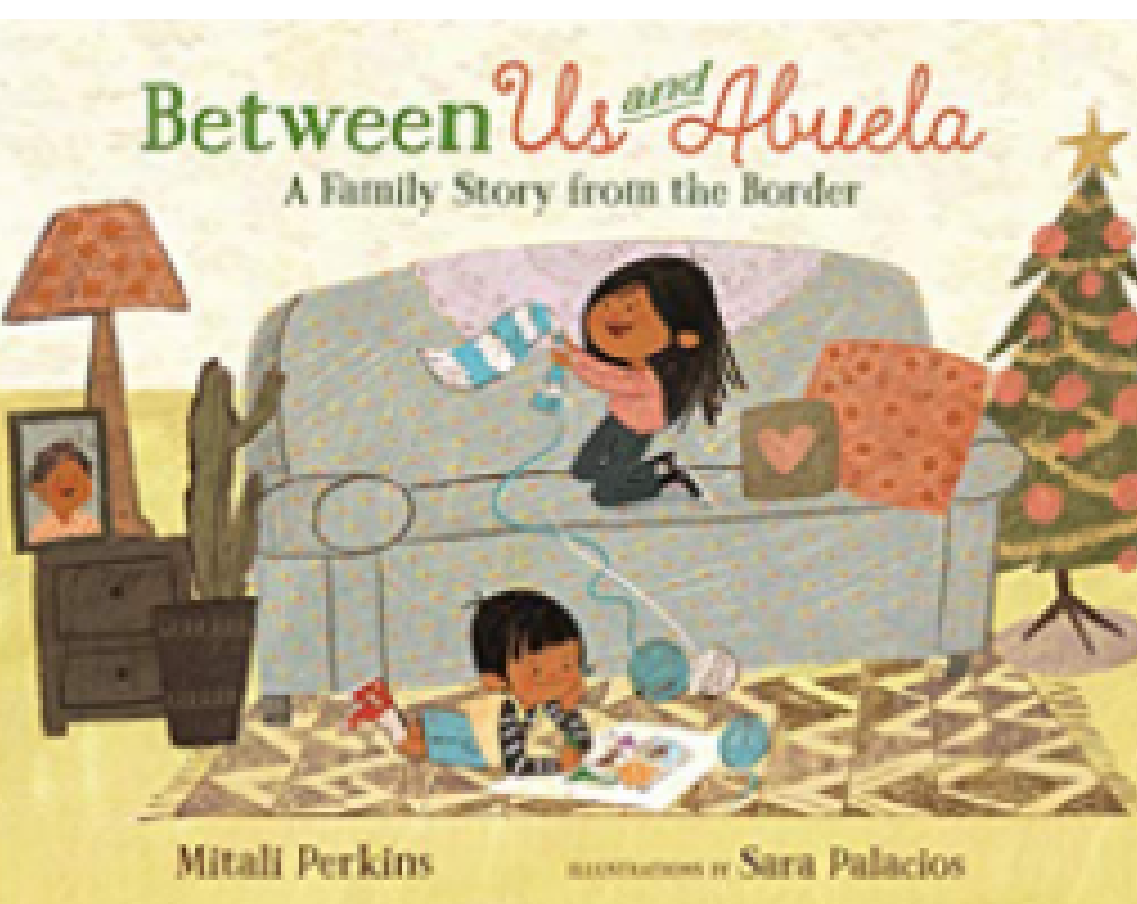


Between Us and Abuela:

A Family Story from the Border

By Mitali Perkins

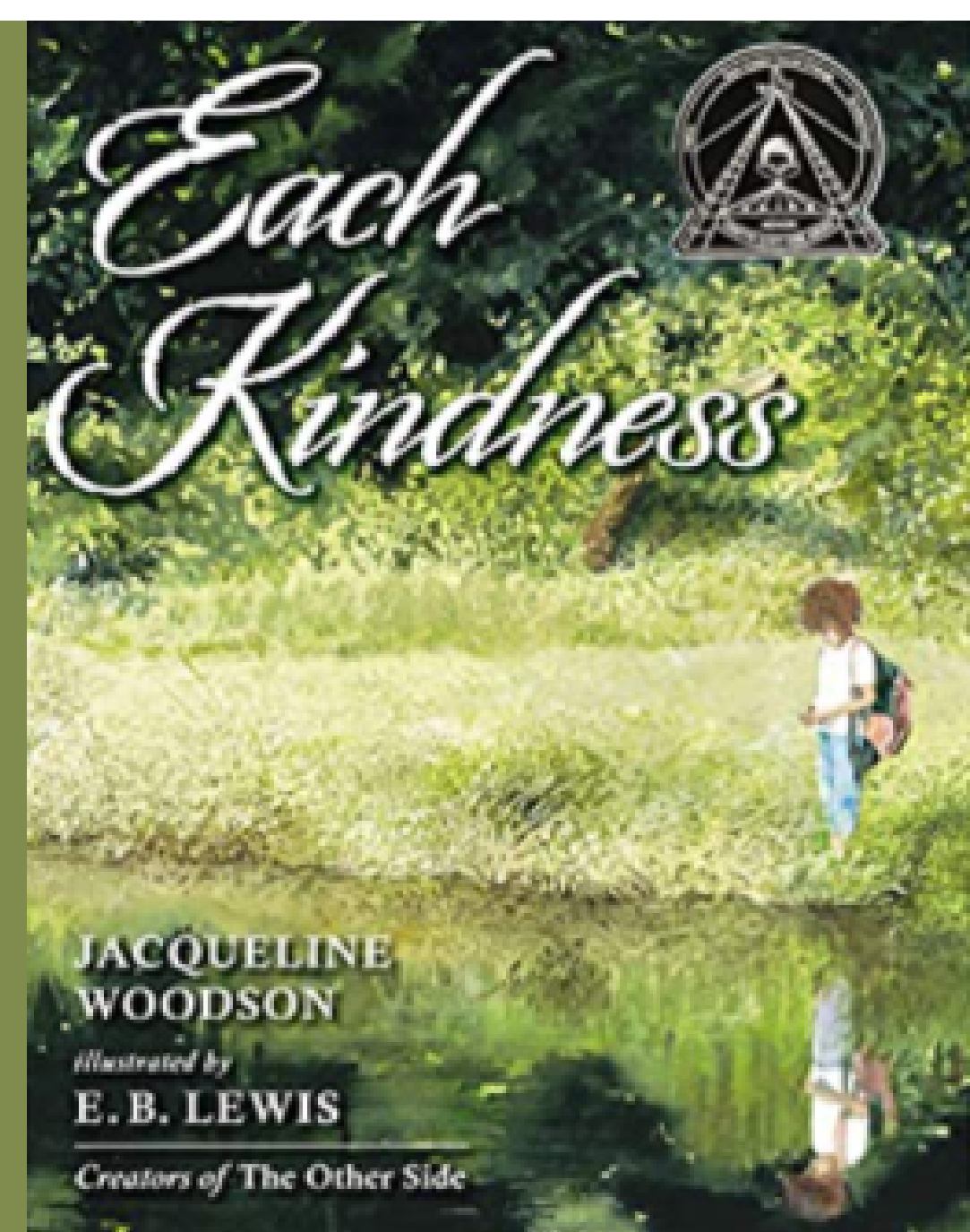
It's almost time for Christmas, and Maria is traveling with her mother and younger brother, Juan, to visit their grandmother on the border of California and Mexico. For the few minutes they can share together along the fence, Maria and her brother plan to exchange stories and Christmas gifts with the grandmother they haven't seen in years. But when Juan's gift is too big to fit through the slats in the fence, Maria has a brilliant idea. Here is a heartwarming tale of families and the miracle of love.



Each Kindness

By Jacqueline Woodson

New girl, Maya, finds herself alone at school. Her obvious poverty sets her apart and the other children reject her overtures of friendship. Another girl, Chloe, narrates the action and the way the other children reject Maya, including her own admission, "She's not my friend." One day, their teacher drops a stone into a bowl of water to demonstrate how powerful the ripples from a single act of kindness can be. "Even small things count," she says. Chloe decides that the next day she will be kind to Maya, but Maya never returns to school and Chloe doesn't get her chance.



From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea

By Kai Cheng Thom



In the magical time between night and day, when both the sun and the moon are in the sky, a child is born in a little blue house on a hill. And Miu Lan is not just any child, but one who can change into any shape they can imagine. The only problem is they can't decide what to be: A boy or a girl? A bird or a fish? A flower or a shooting star? At school, though, they must endure inquisitive looks and difficult questions from the other children, and they have trouble finding friends who will accept them for who they are. But they find comfort in the loving arms of their mother, who always offers them the same loving refrain: "whatever you dream of / i believe you can be / from the stars in the sky to the fish in the sea."

Like the Moon Loves the Sky

By Hena Khan

In this moving picture book, author Hena Khan shares her wishes for her children: "Inshallah you find wonder in birds as they fly. Inshallah you are loved, like the moon loves the sky." With vibrant illustrations and prose inspired by the Quran, this charming picture book is a heartfelt and universal celebration of a parent's unconditional love.



The Spiffiest Giant In Town

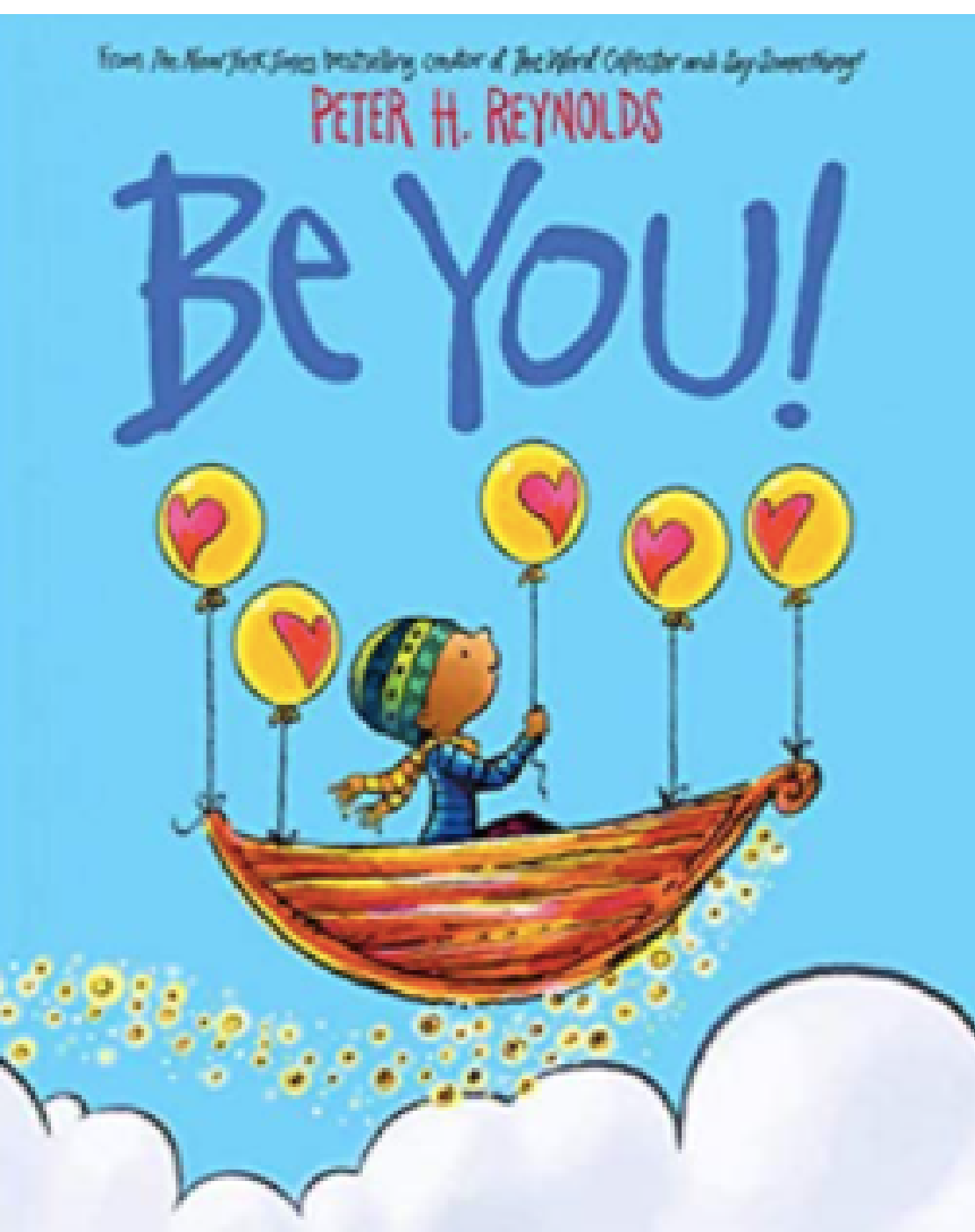
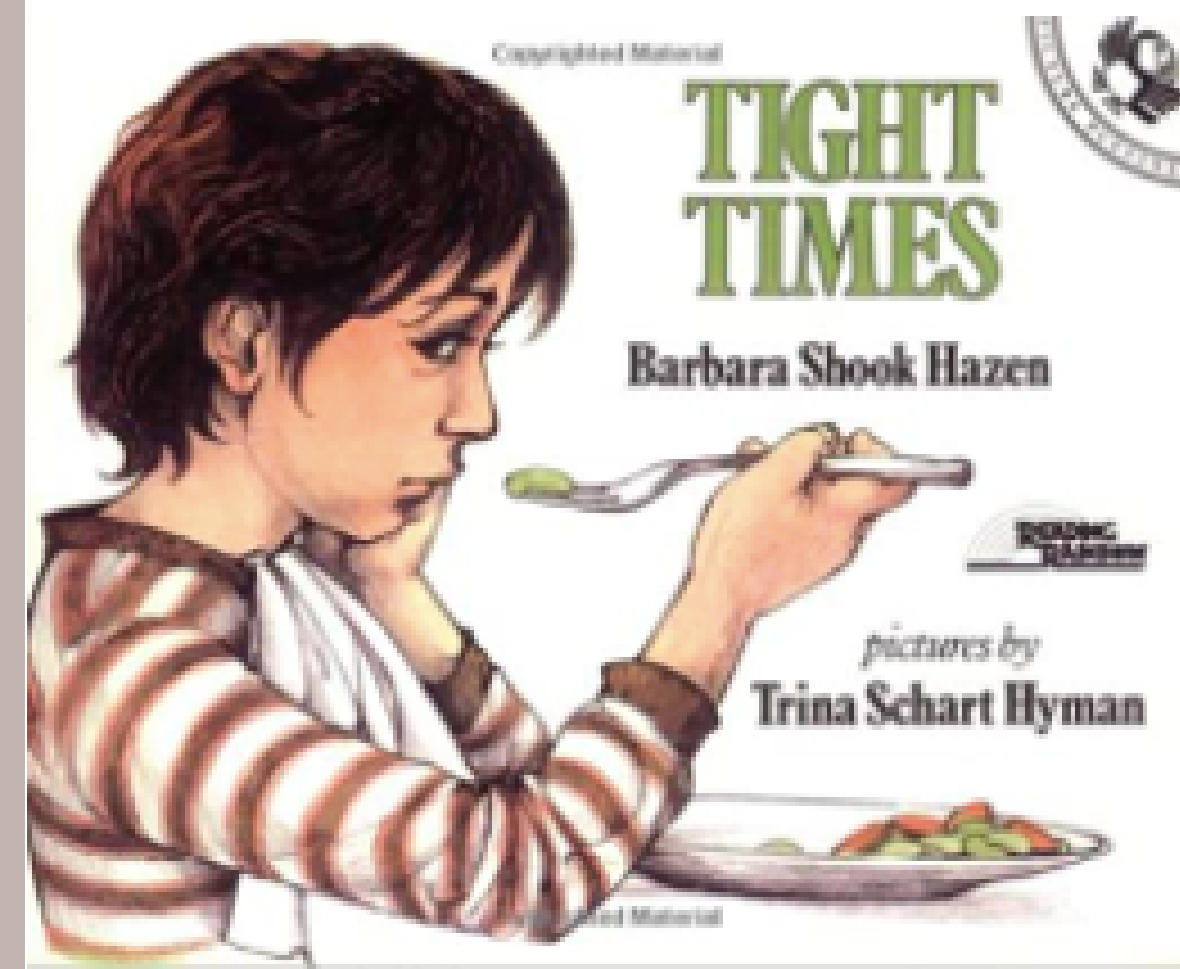
By Julia Donaldson

When George the giant spies a shop full of wonderful clothes, he decides to treat himself to a new outfit. He puts on his new shirt, pants, shoes, and tie, and is immediately transformed from the scruffiest giant in town to the spiffiest giant in town. But on his way home, George runs into various animals who need his help. And little by little, George finds himself giving away all his new purchases.

Tight Times

By Barbara Shook Hazen

A small boy, not allowed to have a dog because times are tight, finds a starving kitten in a trash can on the same day his father loses his job.



Be You!

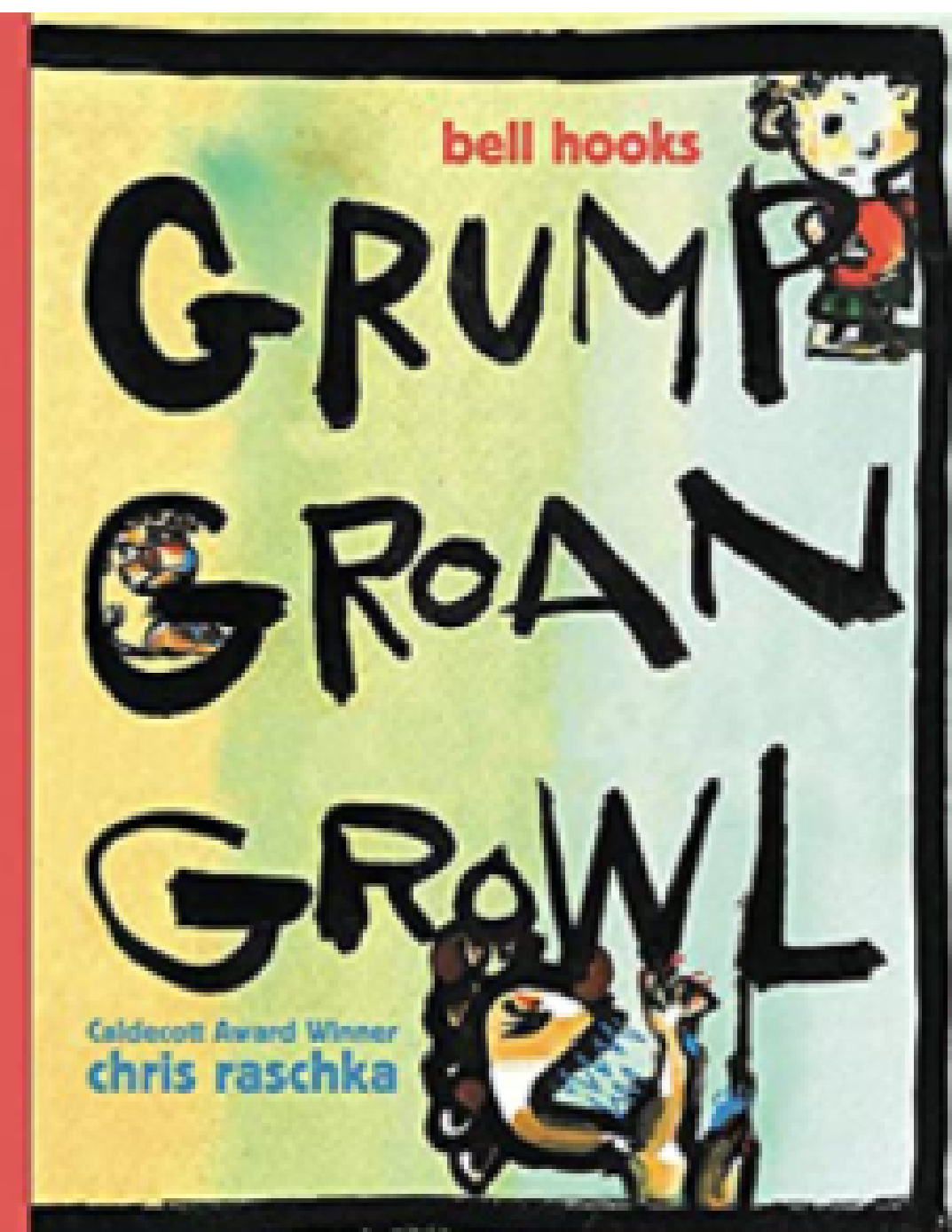
By Peter H . Reynolds

Discover a joyful reminder of the ways that every child is unique and special, from the beloved creator of The Dot, Happy Dreamer, and New York Times bestseller, The World Collector. Here, Reynolds reminds readers to “be your own work of art.” To be patient, persistent, and true. Because there is one, and only one, YOU.

Grump Groan Growl

By Chris Raschka

Here's a positive way to face our bad, grumpy, and wild moods! Acclaimed writer bell hooks offers a vision of calm with a soothingly rhythmic text, while award-winning artist Chris Raschka's vibrant art adds a healthy dose of compassion and humor, reminding readers that sometimes you just have to go inside and let it slide.





El Cucuy Is Scared, Too!

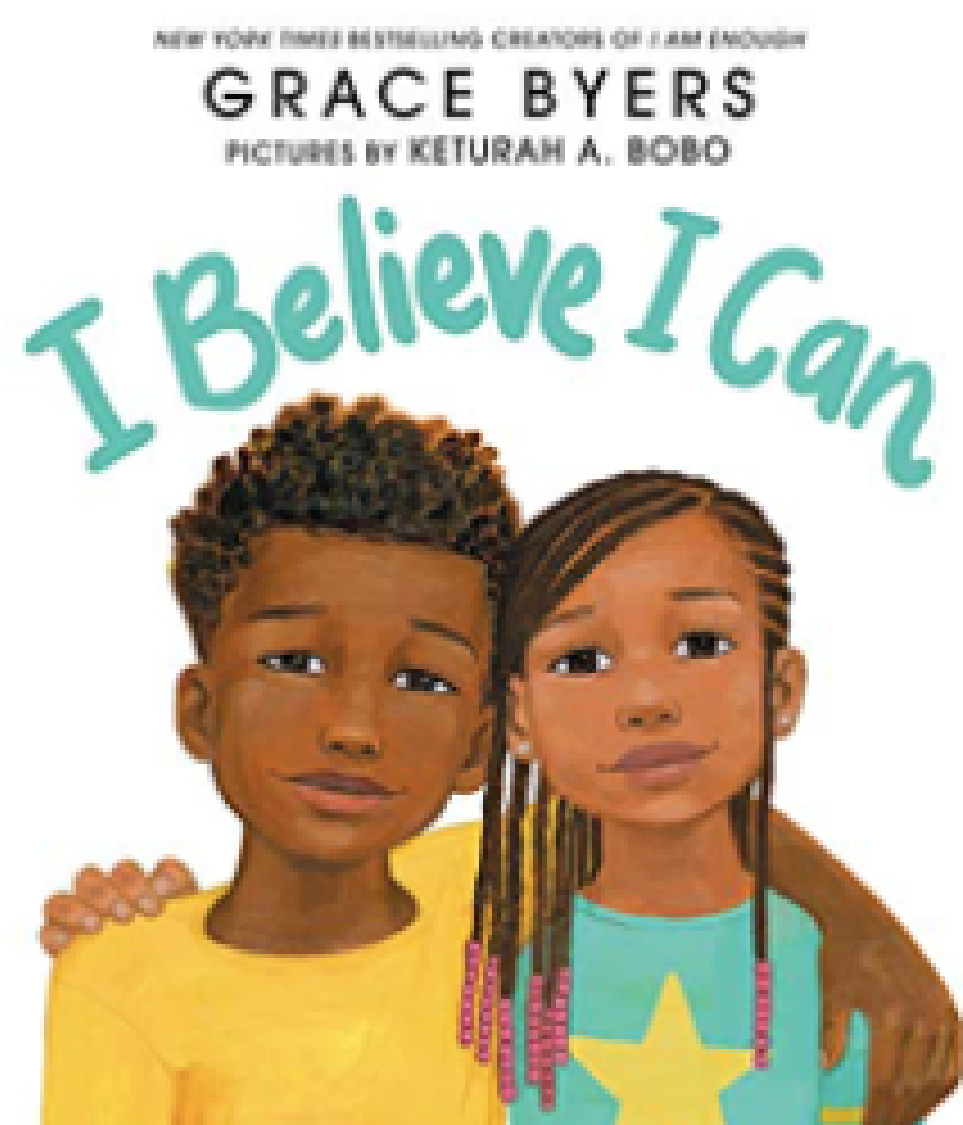
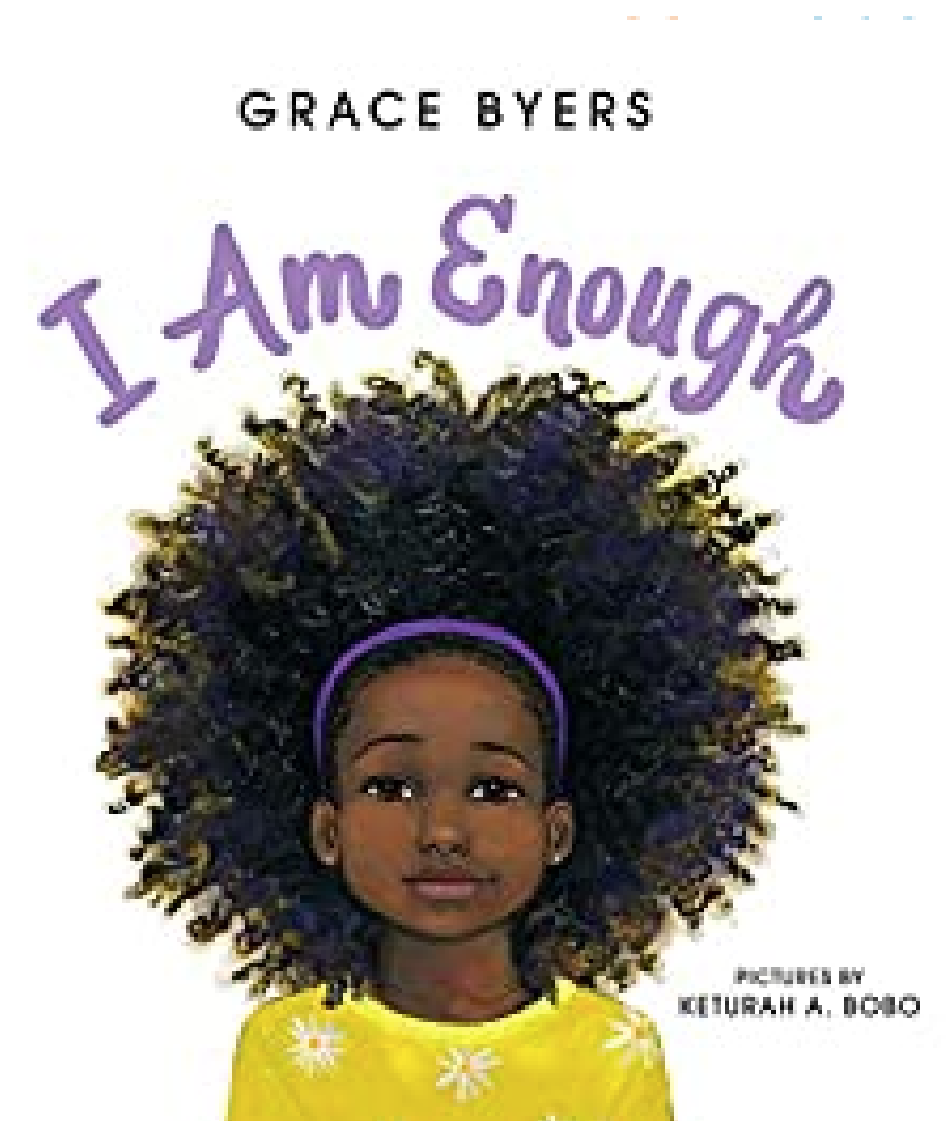
By Donna Barba Higuera

Ramón is a little boy who can't sleep. He is nervous for his first day at a new school. And El Cucuy is the monster who lives in Ramón's cactus pot. He can't sleep, either. It turns out that El Cucuy is scared, too! This gentle, perceptive story explores the worries that can accompany moving to a new place and beginning a new journey—and reveals how comfort, bravery, and strength can be found through even the most unexpected of friendships.

I Am Enough

By Grace Byers

This gorgeous, lyrical ode to loving who you are, respecting others, and being kind to one another comes from Empire actor and activist Grace Byers and talented newcomer artist Keturah A. Bobo. We are all here for a purpose. We are more than enough. We just need to believe it.



I Believe I Can

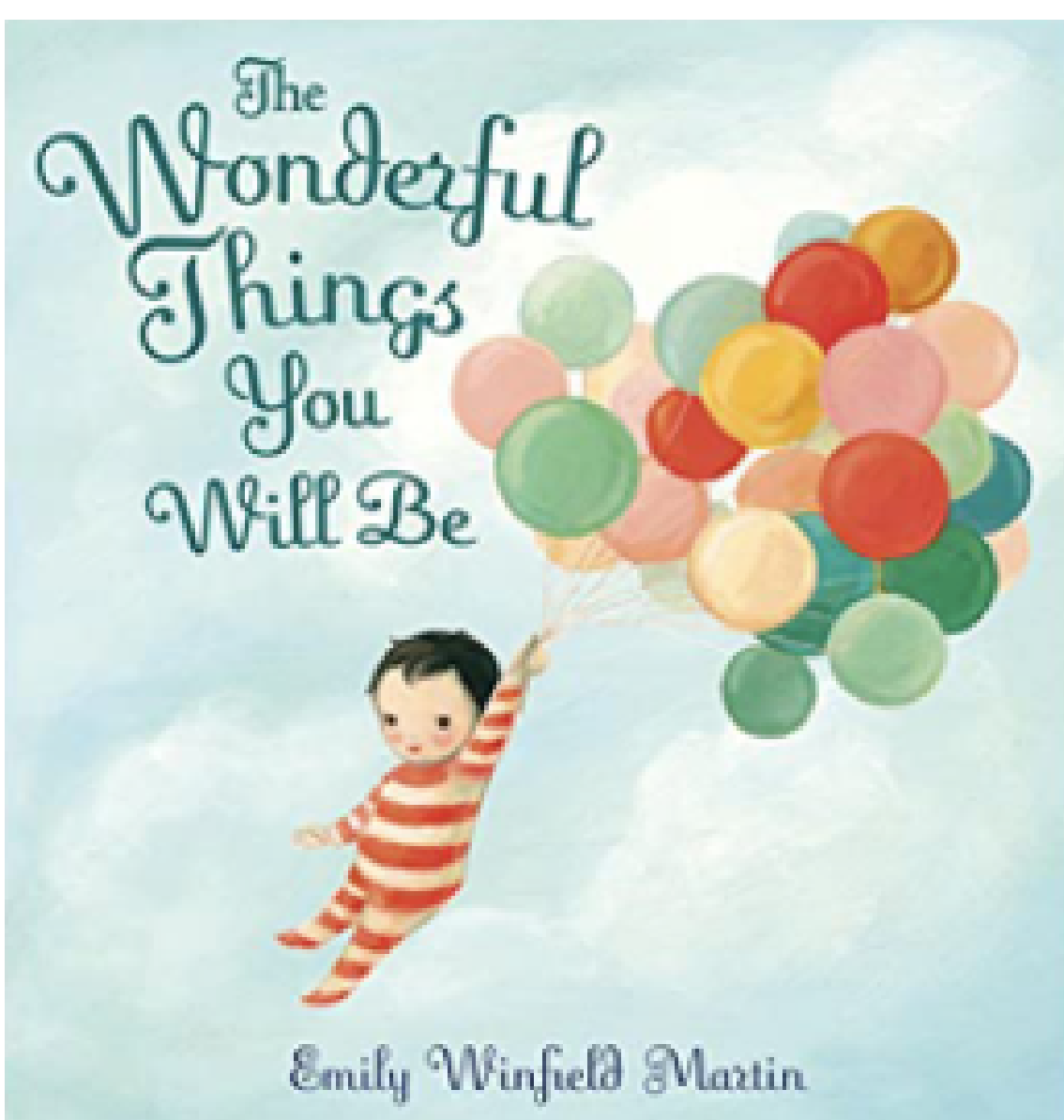
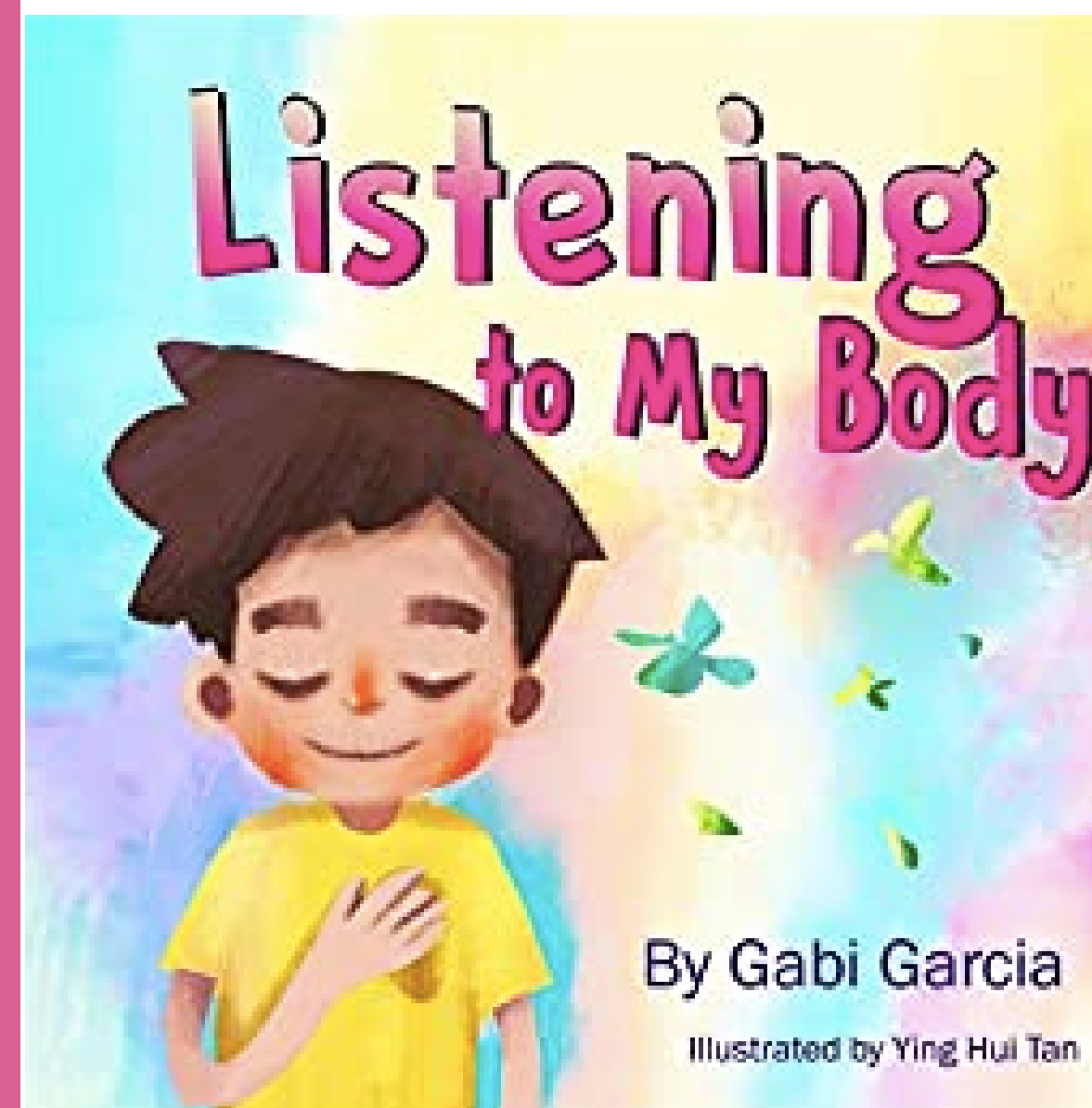
By Grace Byers

I Believe I Can is an affirmation for boys and girls of every background to love and believe in themselves. Actress and activist Grace Byers and artist Keturah A. Bobo returns with another gorgeously illustrated new classic that's the perfect gift for baby showers, birthdays, or just for reading at home again and again.

Listening To My Body: A Guide To Helping Kids Understand The Connection Between Their Sensations

By Gabi garcia
Also available In Spanish

Help your child build on their capacity to engage more mindfully, self-regulate, and develop emotional resilience.



The Wonderful Things You Will Be

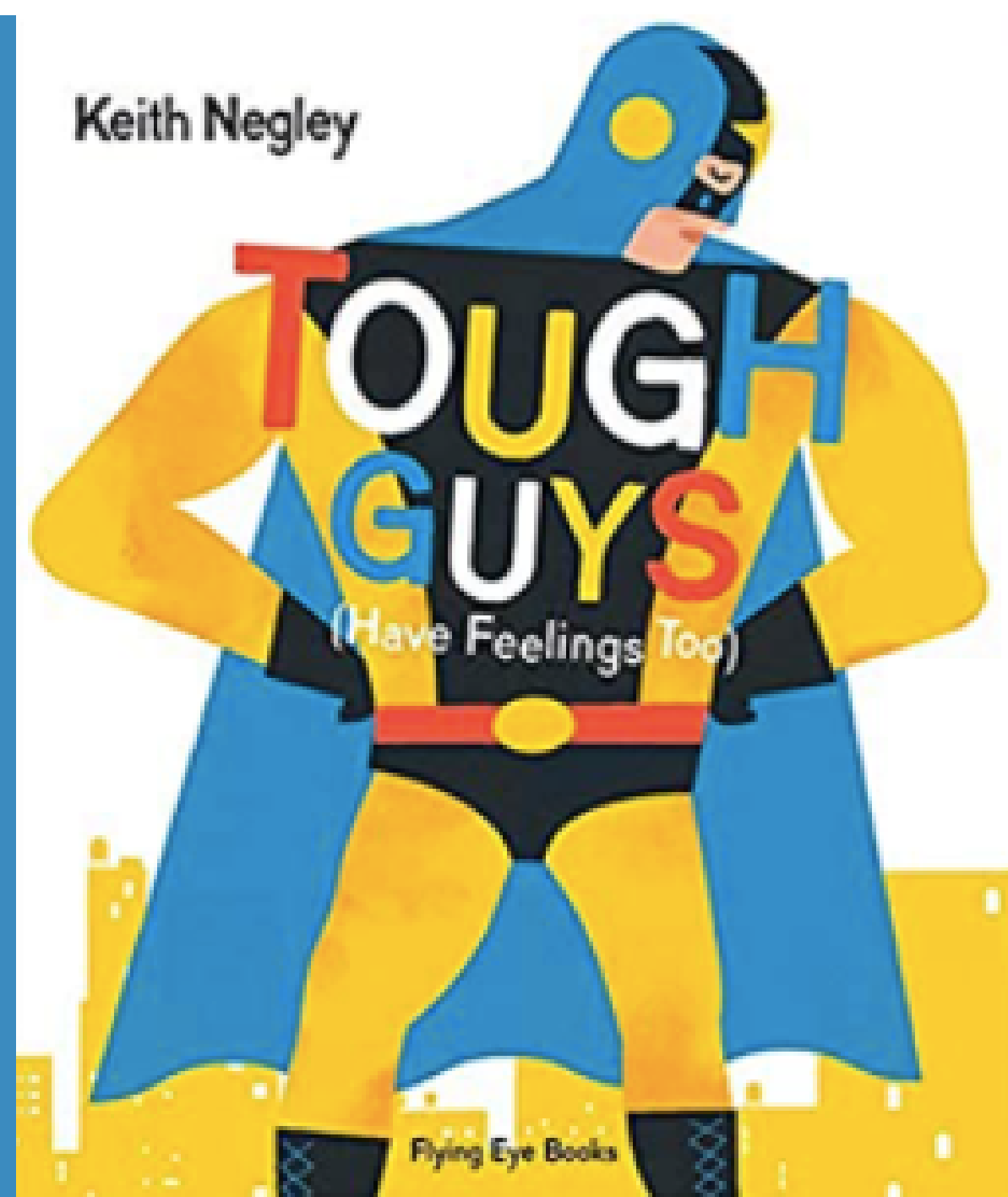
By Emily Winfield Martin

From brave and bold to creative and clever, Emily Winfield Martin's rhythmic rhyme expresses all the loving things that parents think of when they look at their children. With beautiful lush illustrations and a stunning gatefold that opens at the end, this is a book that families will love reading over and over. The Wonderful Things You Will Be has a loving and truthful message that will endure for lifetimes and makes a great fit to the ones you love for any occasion.

Tough Guys Have Feelings Too

By Keith Negley

A boldly illustrated picture book read-aloud about how everyone gets sad—ninjas, wrestlers, knights, superheroes, everyone . . . even daddies have emotions!





When Sadness Is At Your Door

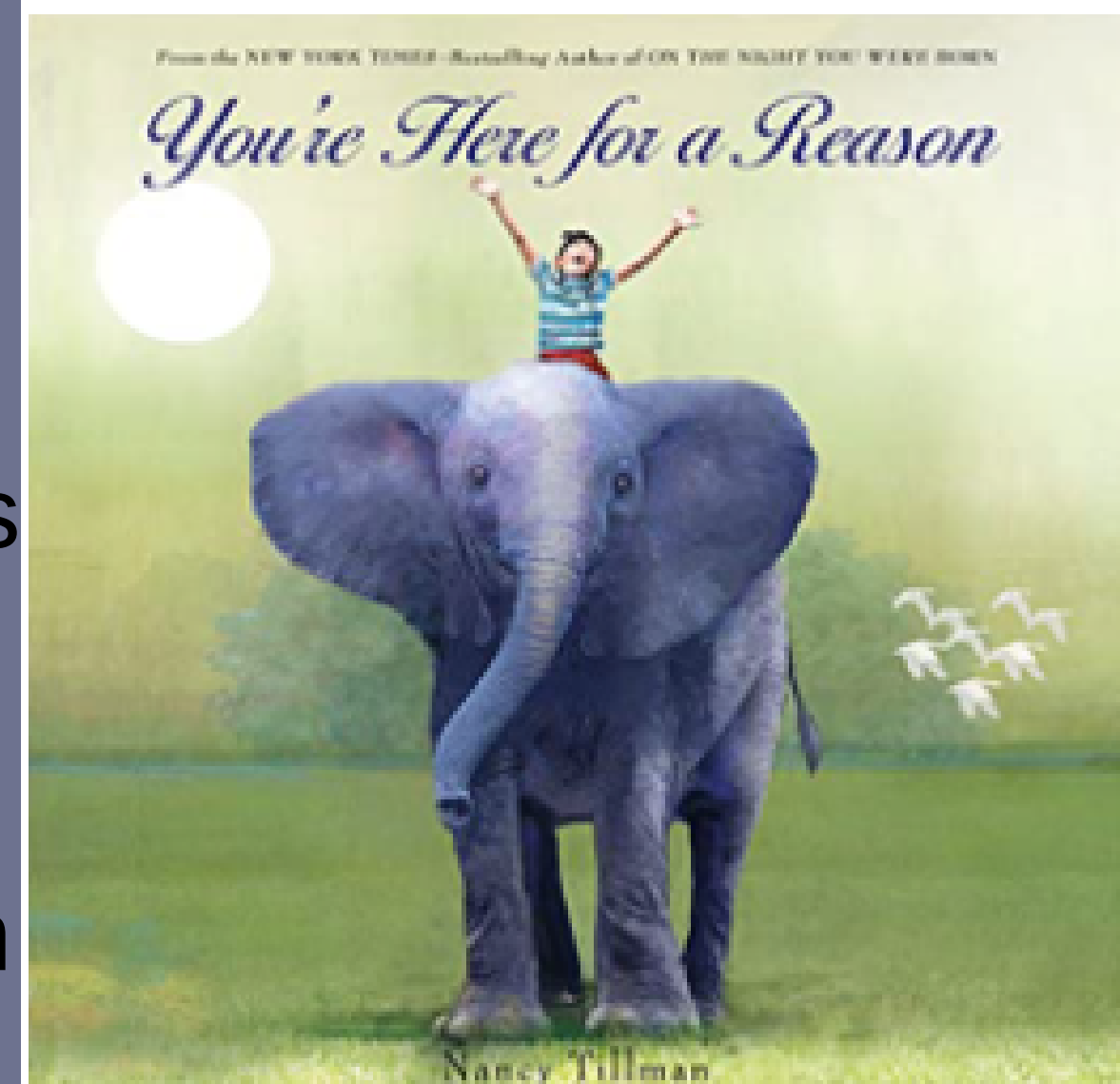
By Eva Eland

Sadness can be scary and confusing at any age! When we feel sad, especially for long periods of time, it can seem as if the sadness is a part of who we are--an overwhelming, invisible, and scary sensation.

You're Here for a Reason

By Nancy Tillman

Not only are we loved, but we also matter. In this tender and timeless read-along book, Tillman reminds us of this message in beautiful illustrations as children and animals interact with acts of kindness.



Barefoot Books: Children of the World

By Kate Depalma

How do other children live? What do they eat? What games do they play? How are we different? How are we alike? Innovative and inclusive, this award-winning book empowers young readers to learn about children around the globe and ponder their own place in it.

Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music

By Margarita Engle

Girls cannot be drummers. Long ago on an island filled with music, no one questioned that rule—until the drum dream girl. In her city of drum beats, she dreamed of pounding tall congas and tapping small bongós. She had to keep quiet. She had to practice in secret. But when at last her dream-bright music was heard, everyone sang and danced and decided that both girls and boys should be free to drum and dream. Inspired by the childhood of Millo Castro Zaldarriaga, a Chinese-African-Cuban girl who broke Cuba's traditional taboo against female drummers, *Drum Dream Girl* tells an inspiring true story for dreamers everywhere.

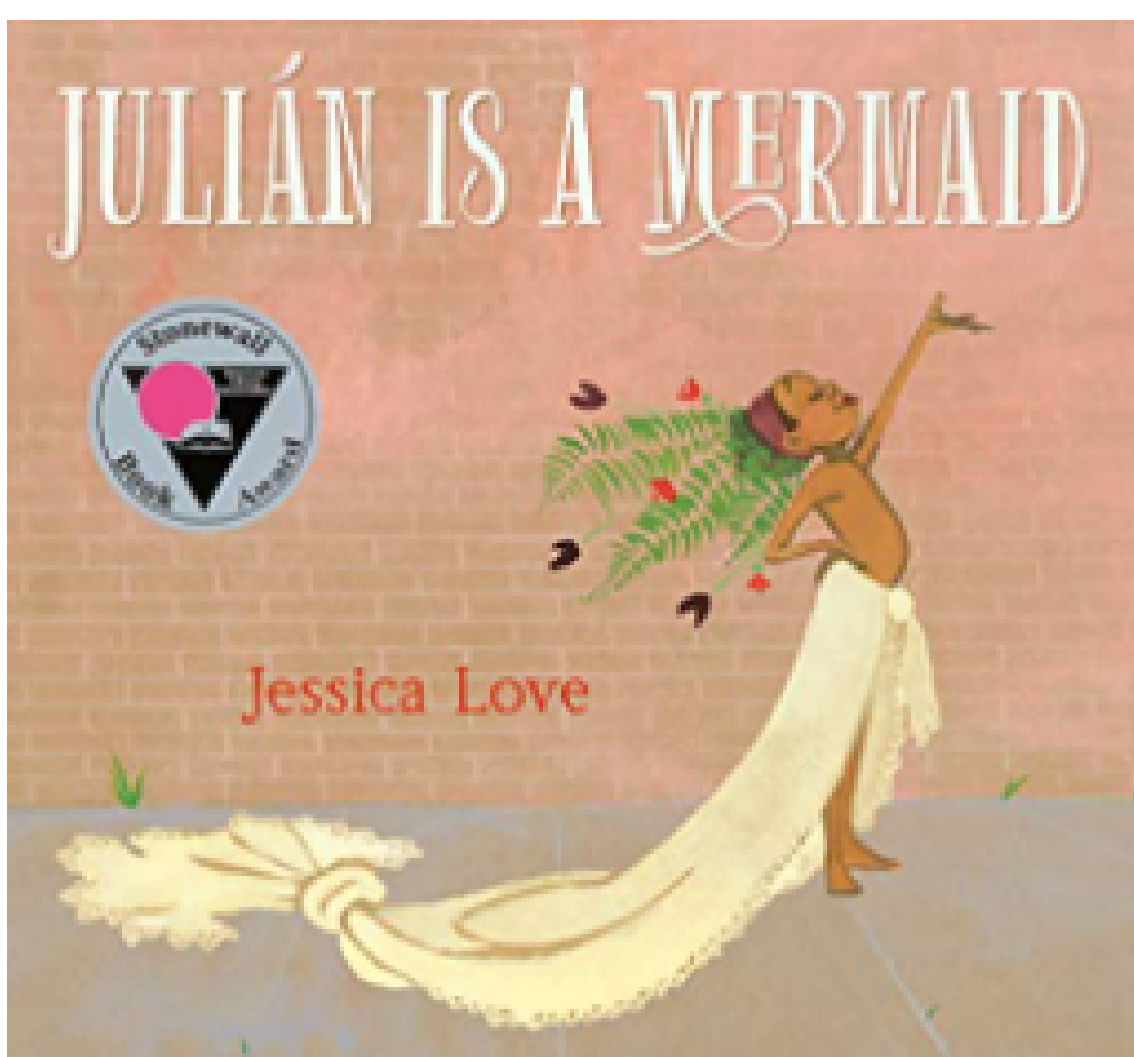


Julián Is a Mermaid

By Jessica Love

Also available In Spanish

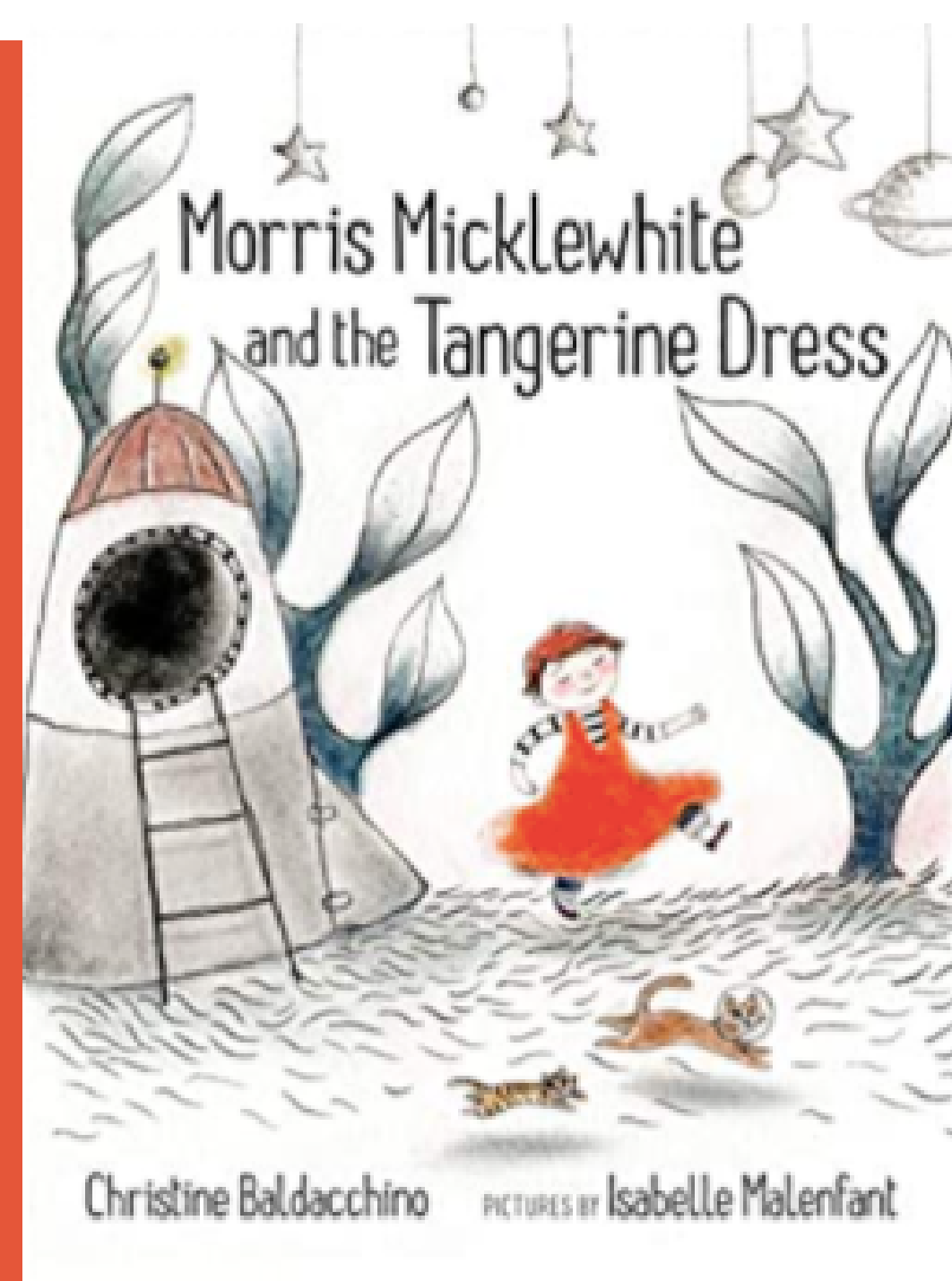
While riding the subway home from the pool with his abuela one day, Julián notices three women spectacularly dressed up. Their hair billows in brilliant hues, their dresses end in fishtails, and their joy fills the train car. When Julián gets home, daydreaming of the magic he's seen, all he can think about is dressing up just like the ladies in his own fabulous mermaid costume: a butter-yellow curtain for his tail, the fronds of a potted fern for his headdress. But what will Abuela think about the mess he makes — and even more importantly, what will she think about how Julián sees himself? Mesmerizing and full of heart, Jessica Love's author-illustrator debut is a jubilant picture of self-love and a radiant celebration of individuality.

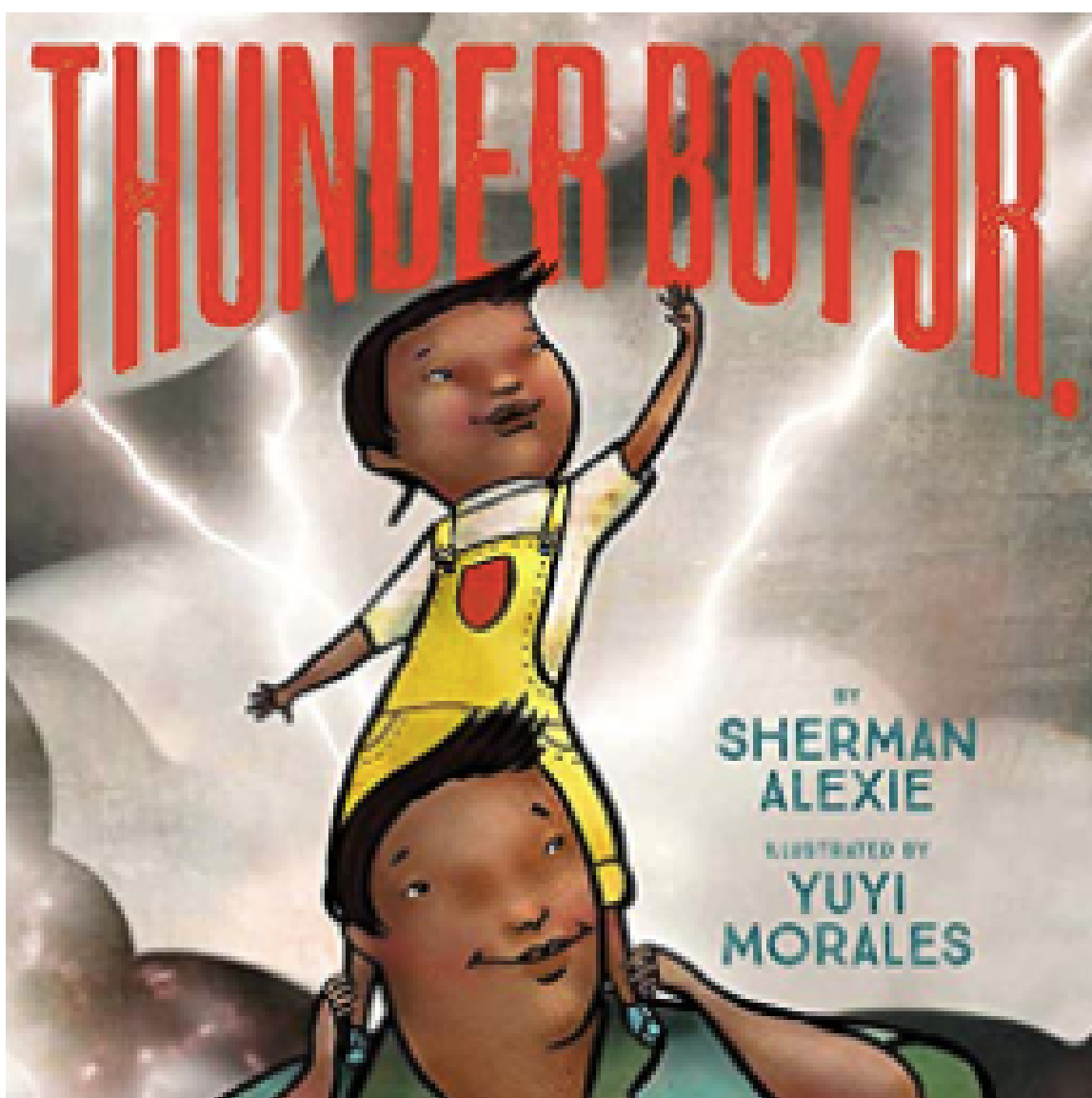


Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress

By Christine Baldacchino

Morris is a little boy who loves using his imagination. But most of all, Morris loves wearing the tangerine dress in his classroom's dress-up center. The children in Morris's class don't understand. Dresses, they say, are for girls. And Morris certainly isn't welcome in the spaceship some of his classmates are building. Astronauts, they say, don't wear dresses. One day when Morris feels all alone and sick from their taunts, his mother lets him stay home from school. Morris dreams of a fantastic space adventure with his cat, Moo. Inspired by his dream, Morris paints the incredible scene he saw and brings it with him to school. He builds his own spaceship, hangs his painting on the front of it and takes two of his classmates on an outer space adventure.





Thunder Boy Jr.

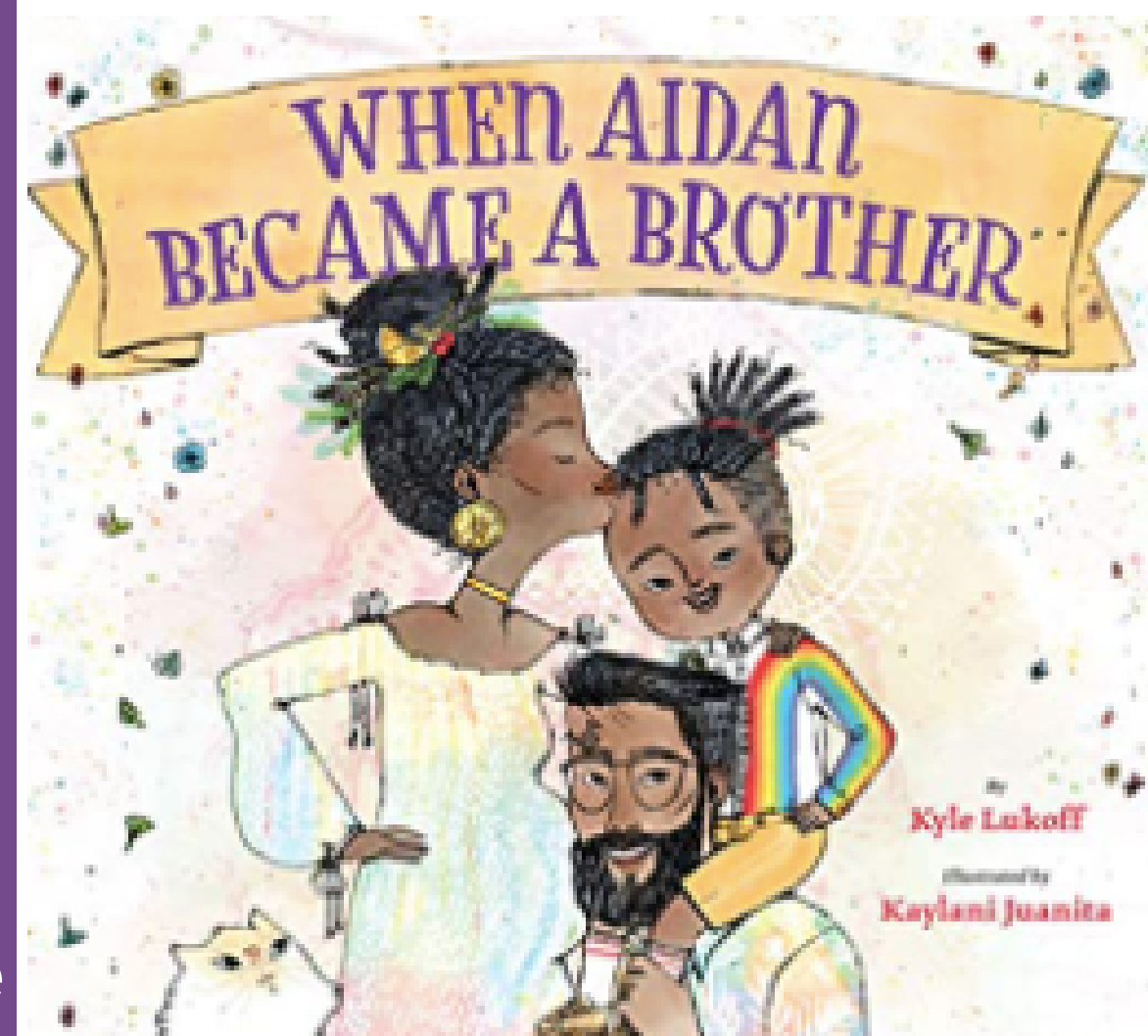
By Sherman Alexie

Thunder Boy Jr. wants a normal name...one that's all his own. Dad is known as big Thunder, but little thunder doesn't want to share a name. He wants a name that celebrates something cool he's done like Touch the Clouds, Not Afraid of Ten Thousand Teeth, or Full of Wonder. But just when Little Thunder thinks all hope is lost, dad picks the best name...Lightning! Their love will be loud and bright, and together they will light up the sky.

When Aidan Became a Brother

By Kyle Lukoff

The first few years of Aidan's life, he often felt misunderstood. People thought he was a girl, but Aidan knew he was a boy. Eventually, Aidan and his parents figured out just what kind of boy he was, and what made him happy. So when his parents tell him that Mom is going to have a baby, Aidan knows his job as a big brother is to make sure the baby feels understood. But when the time comes for the baby to arrive, Aidan starts to worry. What if the baby doesn't like the clothes and the nursery decorations he helped to choose? With his parents' support, he starts to understand that being a good big brother does have to mean doing everything right.



No More Teasing (Katie Woo)

By Fran Manushkin

A mean boy always teases Katie Woo. It makes Katie sad and mad. How can she make the bully stop teasing her?

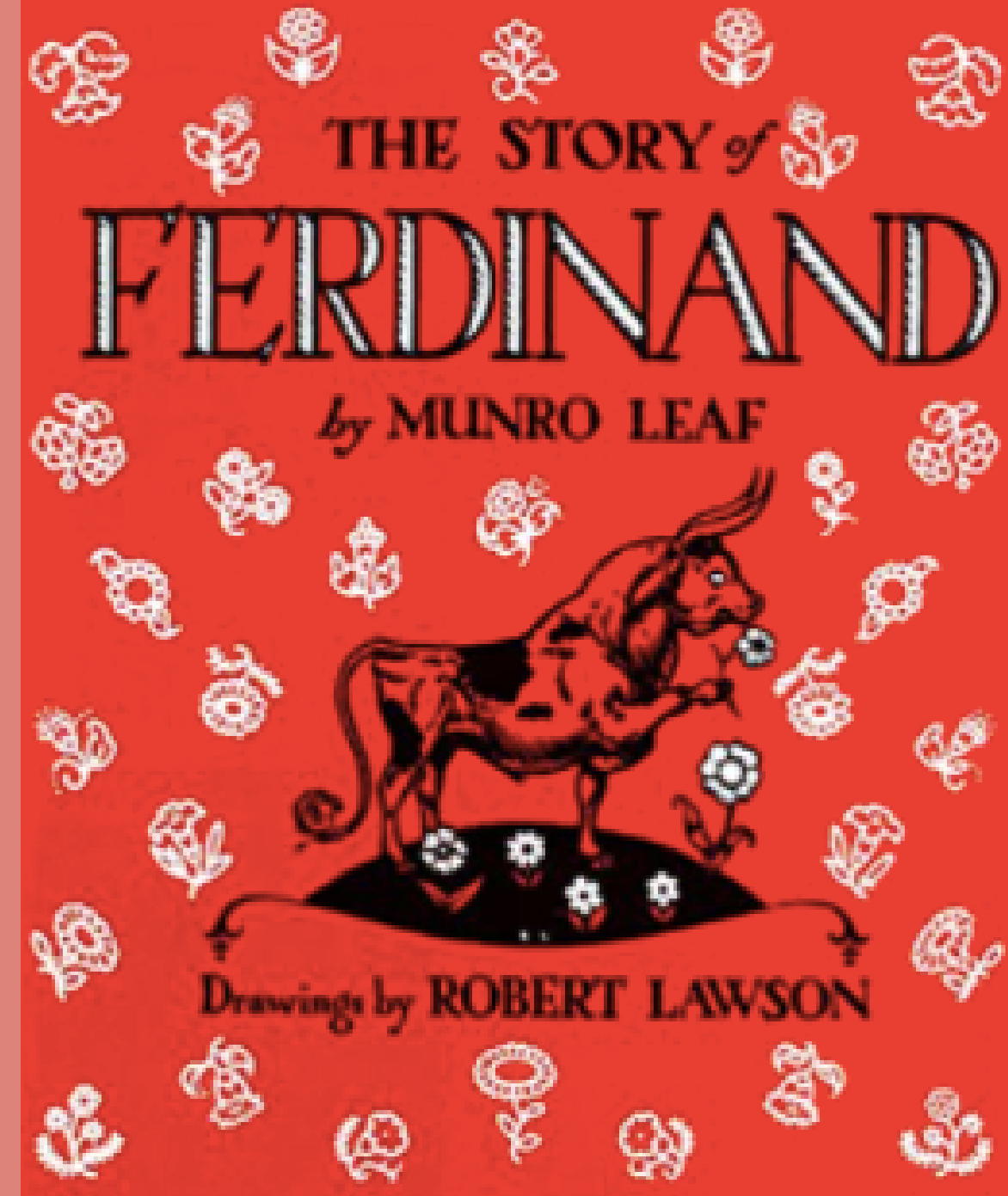


The Story of Ferdinand

By Munro Leaf

Also available In Spanish

All the other bulls would run and jump and butt their heads together. But Ferdinand would rather sit and smell the flowers. So what will happen when our pacifist hero is picked for the bullfights in Madrid?



That's NOT how you do it!

Ariane Hofmann-Maniyar



That's Not How You Do It

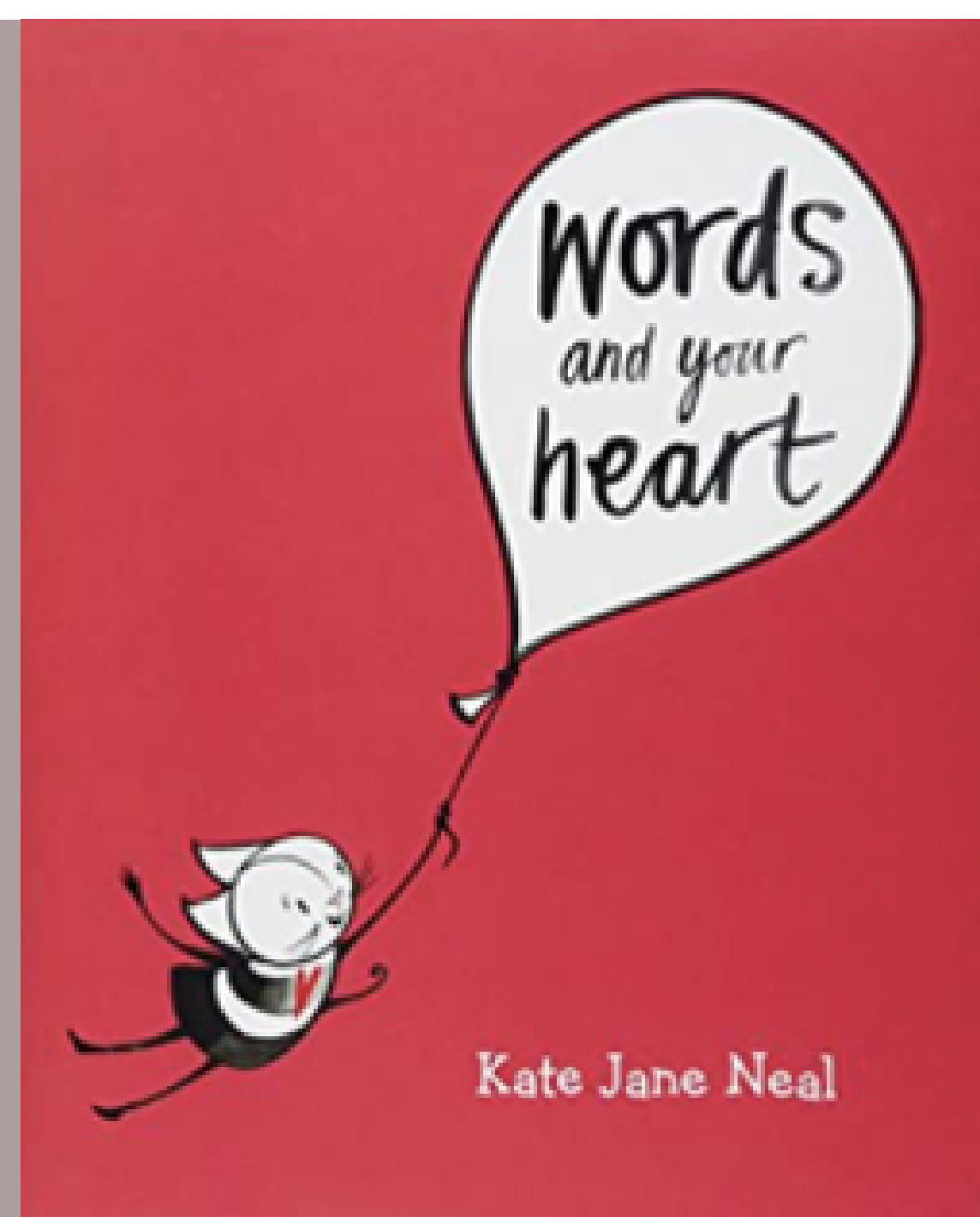
By Ariane Hofmann-Maniyar

Lucy knows how to do everything. All her friends ask her for help if they need to know the right way to do something. When Toshi arrives, Lucy thinks he can't do anything properly at all. She can barely hide her frustration. When she finally tries to teach Toshi the right way to do things, she learns a very important lesson herself.

Words and Your Heart

By Kate Jane Neal

The words we listen to can affect how we feel. Some words can do amazing things and make us happy and some words can really hurt us. Our words have power, and we can choose to use them to make the world a better place.





All Around Us

By Xelena Gonzalez

Also available In Spanish

Grandpa says circles are all around us. He points to the rainbow that rises high in the sky after a thundercloud has come. “Can you see? That’s only half of the circle. That rest of it is down below, in the earth.” He and his granddaughter meditate on gardens and seeds, on circles seen and unseen, inside and outside us, on where our bodies come from and where they return to. They share and create family traditions in this stunning exploration of the cycles of life and nature.

Bad Hair Does Not Exist!

By Sulma Arzu-Brown

Also available In Spanish

“Bad Hair Does Not Exist! / “Pelo Malo No Existe!” – is a book with an anti-bullying message that reinforces respect for individualism. Hispanic and Black children are exposed to the divisive and bullying term, “bad hair,” within their own communities. The term “bad hair” or “pelo malo” is used to describe hair that is usually of curlier texture or of a thick and coarse density. This is irresponsible and often contributes to a child’s low self-esteem, dividing both communities and families. The book’s purpose is to empower all children by giving them alternate terms to describe their hair, and teaching them the importance of respecting one another’s differences.



Dreamers

By Yuyi Morales

Also available In Spanish

Dreamers is a celebration of making your home with the things you always carry: your resilience, your dreams, your hopes and history. It's the story of finding your way in a new place, of navigating an unfamiliar world and finding the best parts of it. In dark times, it's a promise that you can make better tomorrows. This lovingly-illustrated picture book memoir looks at the myriad gifts migrantes bring with them when they leave their homes. It's a story about family. And it's a story to remind us that we are all dreamers, bringing our own strengths wherever we roam. Beautiful and powerful at any time but given particular urgency as the status of our own Dreamers becomes uncertain, this is a story that is both topical and timeless.

Maybe Something Beautiful: How Art Transformed a Neighborhood

By F. Isabel Campoy

Also available In Spanish

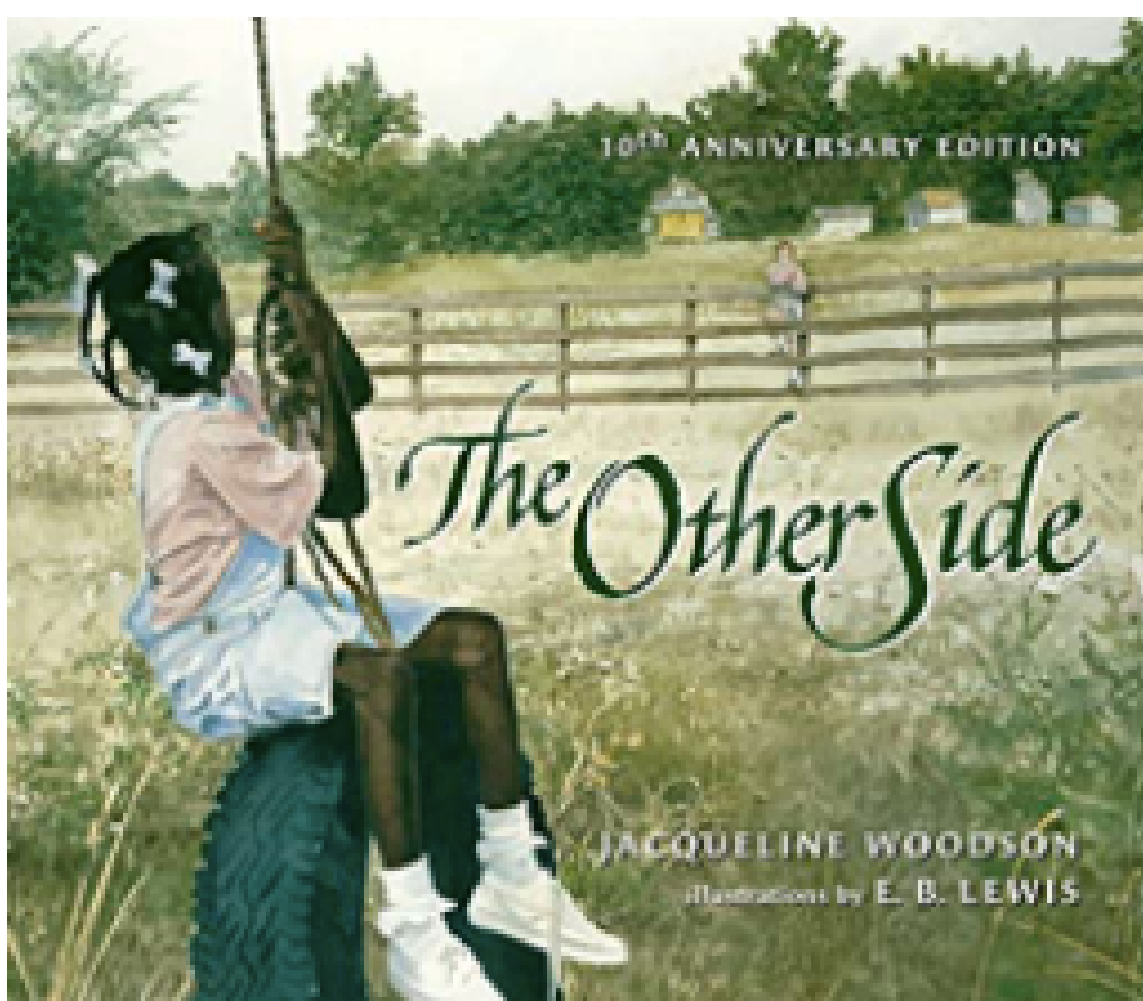
What good can a splash of color do in a community of gray? As Mira and her neighbors discover, more than you might ever imagine! Based on the true story of the Urban Art Trail in San Diego, California, *Maybe Something Beautiful* reveals how art can inspire transformation—and how even the smallest artists can accomplish something big. Pick up a paintbrush and join the celebration!



The Other Side

By Jacqueline Woodson

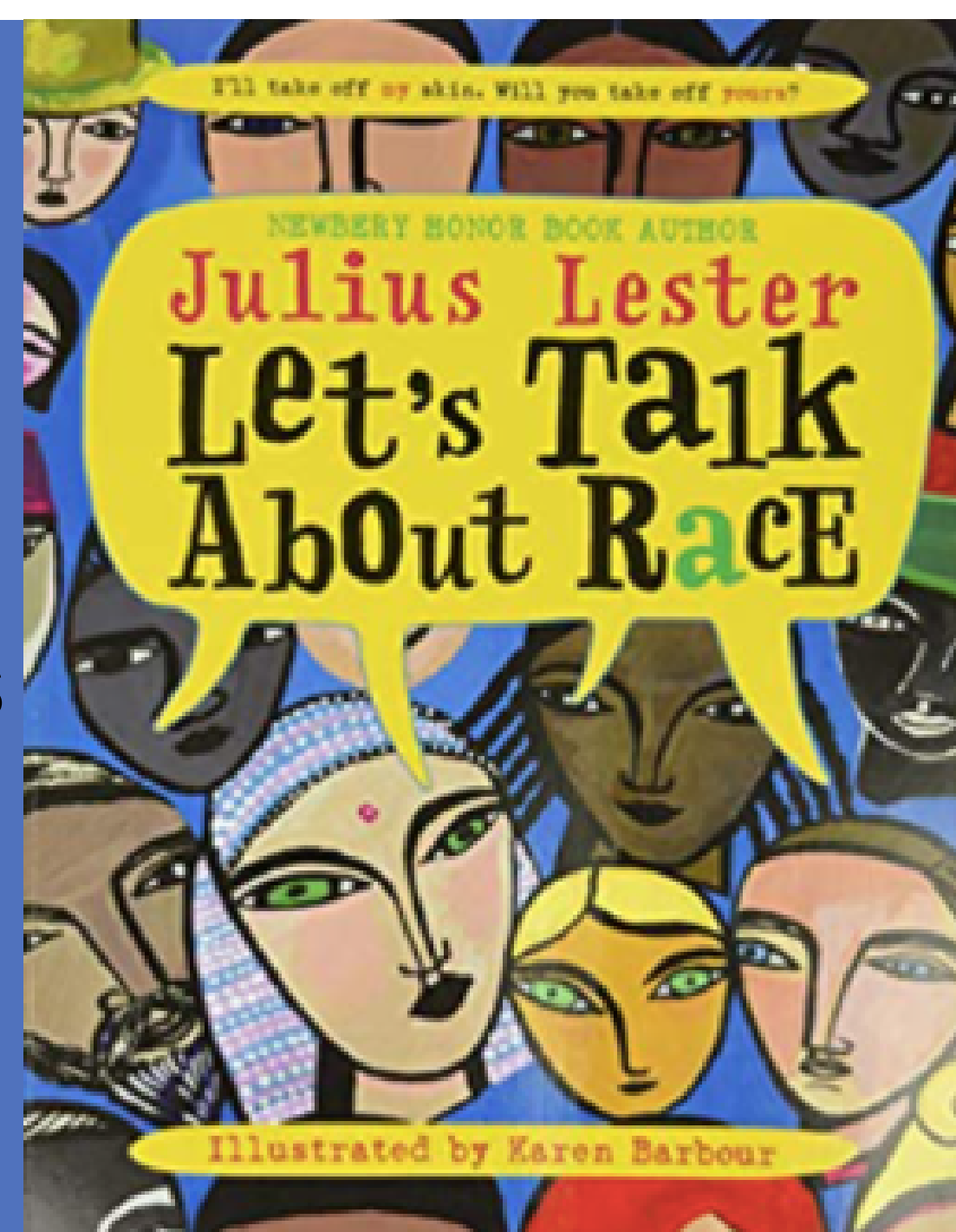
Clover's mom says it isn't safe to cross the fence that segregates their African-American side of town from the white side where Anna lives. But the two girls strike up a friendship, and get around the grown-ups' rules by sitting on top of the fence together.

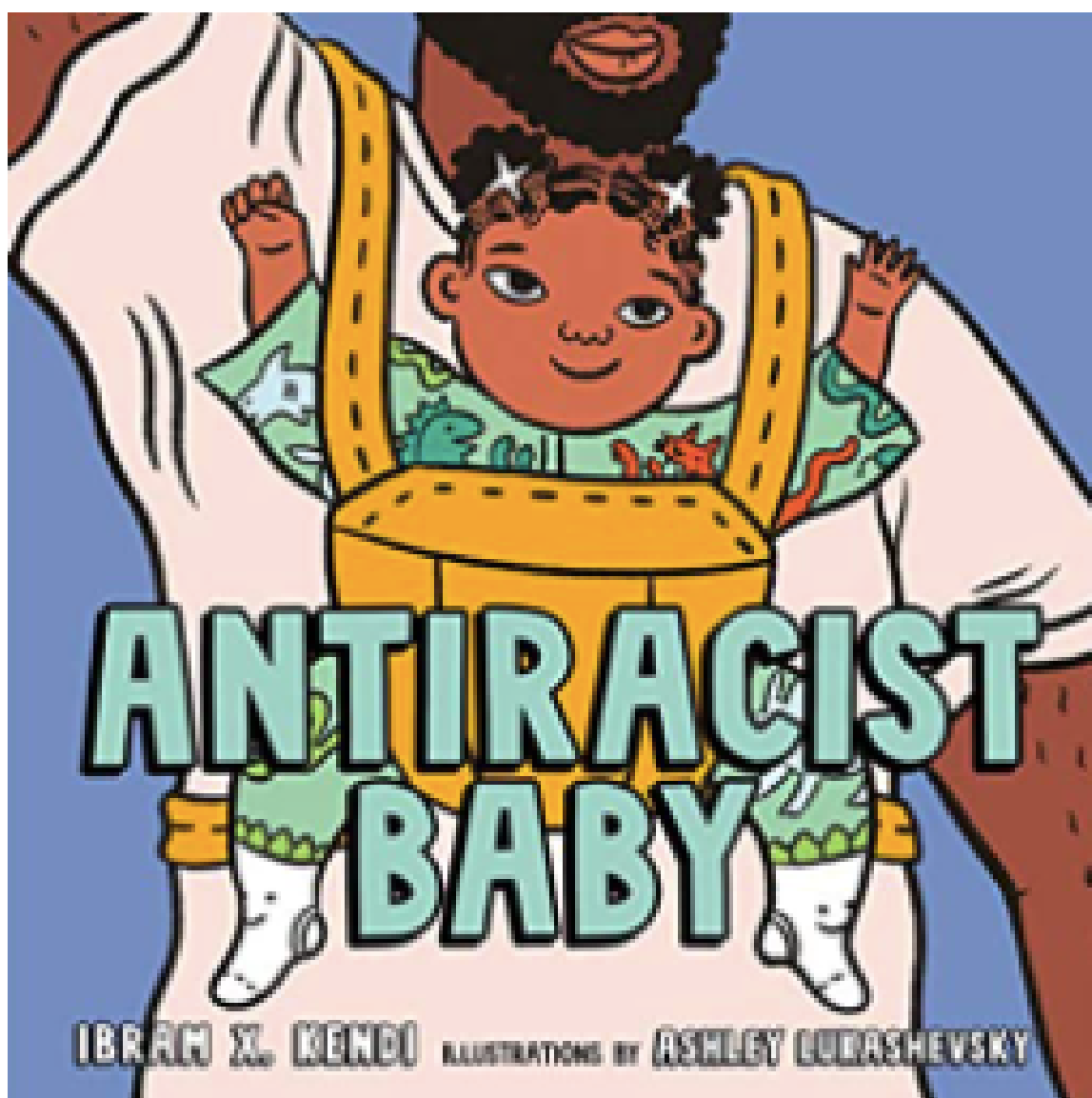


Let's Talk About Race

By Julius Lester

In this acclaimed book, the author of the Newbery Honor Book *To Be a Slave* shares his own story as he explores what makes each of us special. A strong choice for sharing at home or in the classroom.





Antiracist Baby

By Ibram X. Kendi

Take your first steps with Antiracist Baby! Or rather, follow Antiracist Baby's nine easy steps for building a more equitable world. With bold art and thoughtful yet playful text, Antiracist Baby introduces the youngest readers and the grown-ups in their lives to the concept and power of antiracism. Providing the language necessary to begin critical conversations at the earliest age, Antiracist Baby is the perfect gift for readers of all ages dedicated to forming a just society.

All the Colors We Are: The Story of How We Get Our Skin Color

By Katie Kissinger

Celebrate the essence of one way we are all special and different from one another - our skin color! This bilingual (English/Spanish) book offers children a simple, scientifically accurate explanation about how our skin color is determined by our ancestors, the sun, and melanin. It's also filled with colorful photographs that capture the beautiful variety of skin tones. Reading this book frees children from the myths and stereotypes associated with skin color and helps them build positive identities as they accept, understand, and value our rich and diverse world. Unique activity ideas are included to help you extend the conversation with children.



I Am Brown

By Ashok Banker

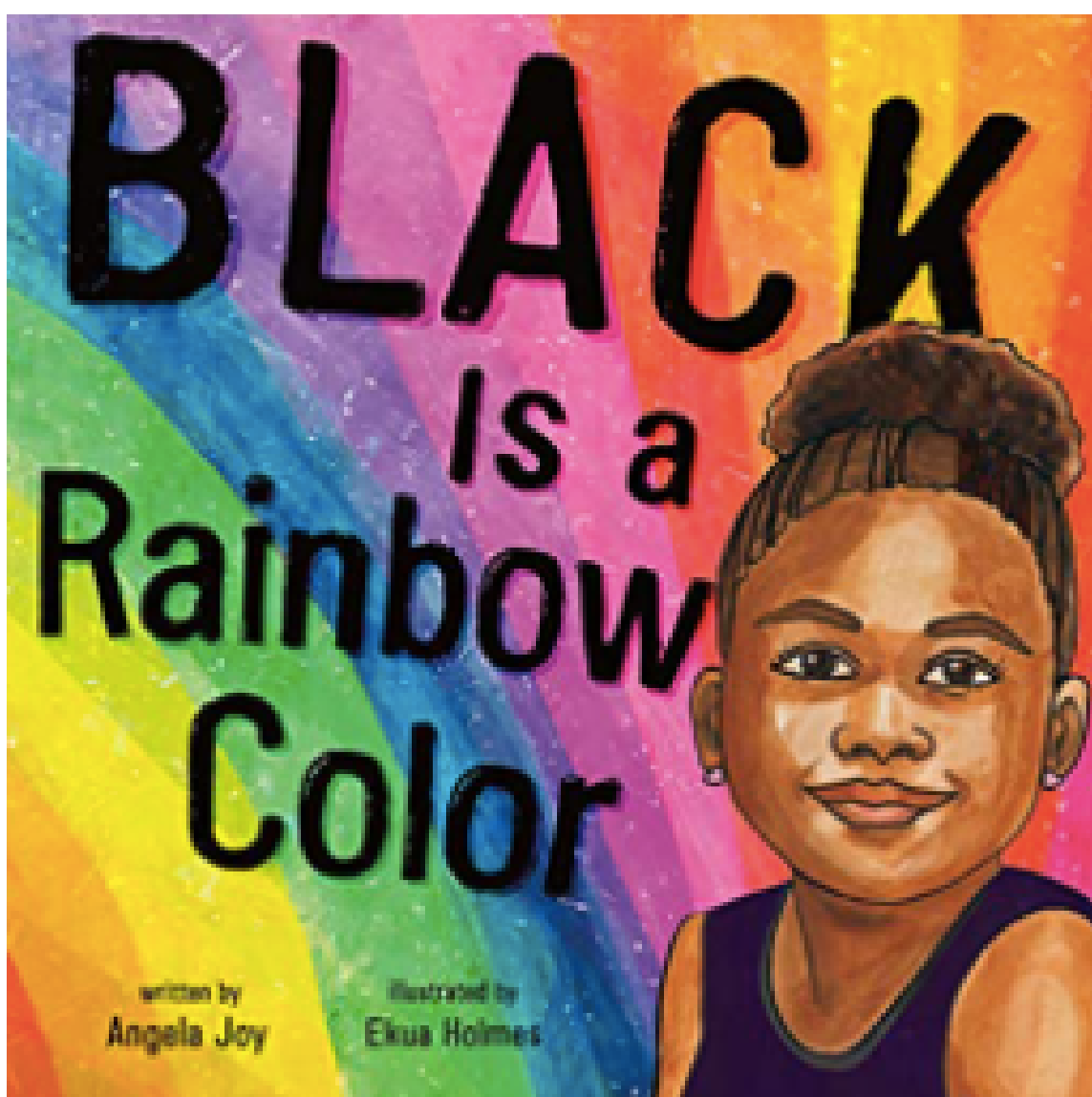
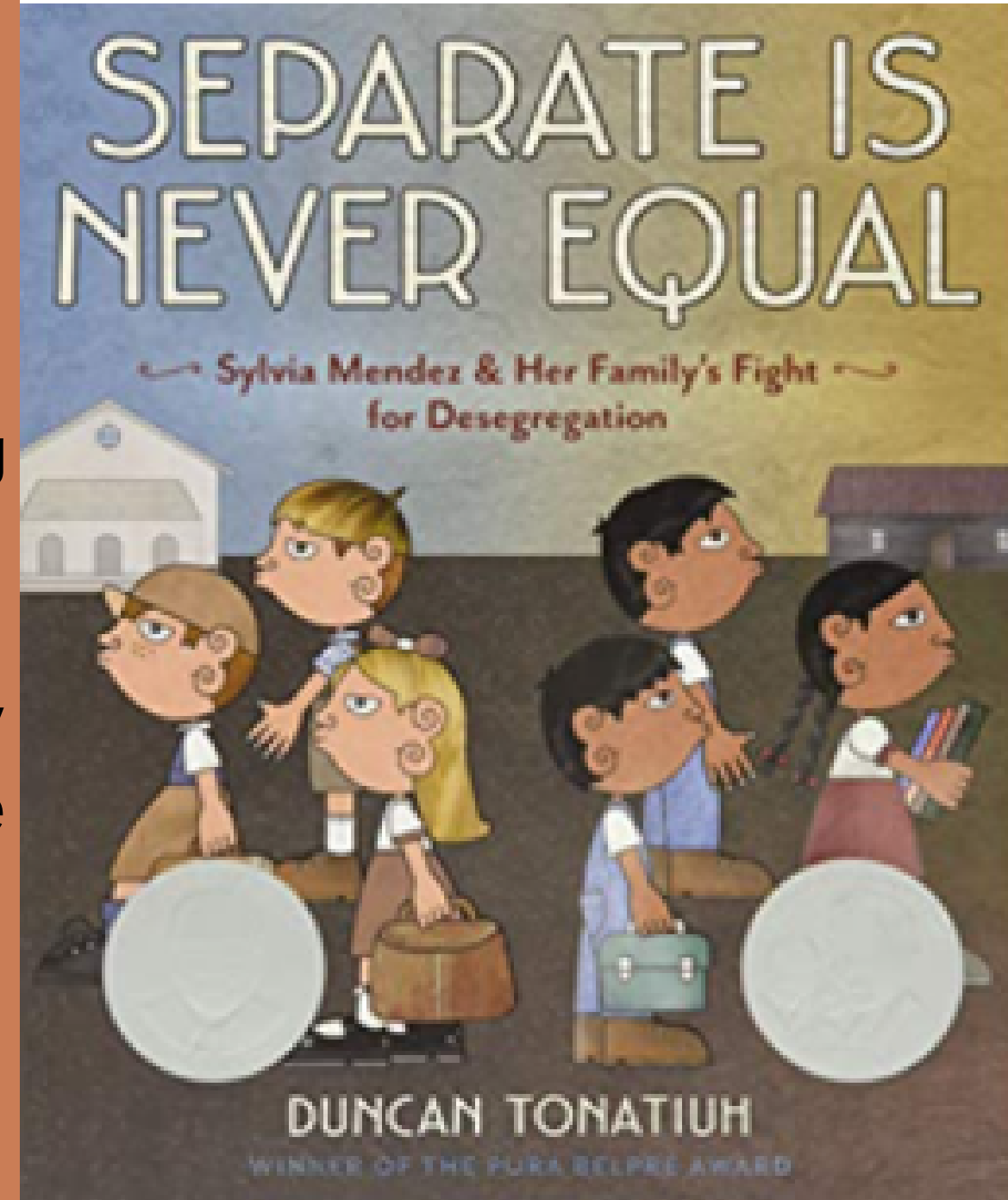
I am brown. I am beautiful. I am perfect. I designed this computer. I ran this race. I won this prize. I wrote this book. A joyful celebration of the skin you're in - of being brown, of being amazing, of being you.



Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

By Duncan Tonatiuh

When her family moved to the town of Westminster, California, young Sylvia Mendez was excited about enrolling in her neighborhood school. But she and her brothers were turned away and told they had to attend the Mexican school instead. Sylvia could not understand why—she was an American citizen who spoke perfect English. Why were the children of Mexican families forced to attend a separate school? Unable to get a satisfactory answer from the school board, the Mendez family decided to take matters into its own hands and organize a lawsuit.



Black Is a Rainbow Color

By Angela Joy

From the wheels of a bicycle to the robe on Thurgood Marshall's back, Black surrounds our lives. It is a color to simply describe some of our favorite things, but it also evokes a deeper sentiment about the incredible people who helped change the world and a community that continues to grow and thrive.

Counting on Community

By Innosanto Nagara

Counting on Community is Innosanto Nagara's follow-up to his hit ABC book, A is for Activist. Counting up from one stuffed piñata to ten hefty hens--and always counting on each other--children are encouraged to recognize the value of their community, the joys inherent in healthy eco-friendly activities, and the agency they possess to make change. A broad and inspiring vision of diversity is told through stories in words and pictures. And of course, there is a duck to find on every page!

