

CHRISTIAN ROBINSON



From Another, written and illustrated by Christian Robinson

USBBY Illustrator Nominee

2024 Hans Christian Andersen Award for Illustration

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Biography



Photo credit: John Kwiatkowski

Christian Robinson, an award-winning African American illustrator of children's books, was born in Hollywood, California on August 2, 1986. He grew up in a small, crowded one-bedroom apartment. Because his father was absent and his mother was incarcerated for much of his childhood, Robinson was raised by his grandmother.

Robinson had a hard time learning to read as a child, so he was drawn to books with pictures: "I just love that so much could be communicated with just an image." Making his own drawings became a way for Robinson to make space for himself and to discover the empowering impact of art. He says, "We didn't have a lot growing up, but I at least always had a pencil, paper. I couldn't control the circumstances around me, but I could at least decide what I wanted on that piece of paper, what sort of world I wanted to create." (PBS News Hour)

As a young person, Robinson didn't see books that reflected his own story, and it wasn't until he started school that he realized that his family experience was unusual. He says that he internalized a sense of shame about that difference, and he hopes that books such as *Milo Imagines the World*, about a young boy who visits his incarcerated parent, can help young people avoid experiencing the shame and embarrassment that he felt as a child: "I know firsthand a lot of the feelings around that experience . . . And that isn't something I want young people today to have to carry." And he adds, "I also wanted to create space for conversations and connections for kids who might not know this experience to be included" (Robinson, 2022).

Robinson graduated with a BFA in Character Animation from the California Institute of the Arts. He then worked with the Sesame Workshop and Pixar Animation Studios. During his internship with Pixar, Robinson had a supportive mentor who encouraged him to trust in his own creative voice and introduced him to the idea of becoming a picture-book illustrator.

Since then, Robinson has created a remarkably prolific and notable body of work, with 20 award-winning children's books to date, from early concept books for the very young to picture-book biographies and fictional portrayals of the real, diverse world in which children live to playful, sophisticated experiments with perspective. In all of his mixed-media work,

Biography

Robinson employs a deceptively simple style, blooming with vibrant color and elemental shapes, that is appealing to children of all backgrounds.

Robinson has earned some of the top awards for youth literature in the U.S., including twice being named a Caldecott Honor Book illustrator. Books he has illustrated have also garnered international acclaim, including recognition as a BolognaRagazzi Nonfiction Honor Book and a Kate Greenaway Medal Finalist, and his titles have been widely translated. In addition to receiving glowing reviews in professional journals, his books appear consistently on annual “best of” booklists, including those chosen by young readers themselves. And in his picture-book collaborations, he has worked with some of the most distinguished authors in the U.S., including Matt de la Peña, Julia Fogliano, Kelly DiPucchio, Cynthia Rylant, Mac Barnett, and Renée Watson.

Along with his award-winning work for children’s books, Robinson has also created art for children to encounter off the page and in the context of their daily lives. These projects include a public library mural and bright, reassuring images on a mobile health care bus for underserved communities. And during quarantine periods of the pandemic, he created a video series, “Making Spaces,” in which he invited children to explore their own feelings and creativity through art projects and stories. Each episode appeared on his website, The Art of Fun, an apt name that further reflects the profound sense of inclusivity and joy his work evokes.

On January 14, 2023, a retrospective exhibit celebrating Christian Robinson’s picture-book art, “What Might You Do? Christian Robinson,” opened at the Eric Carle Museum, the preeminent museum for children’s book artwork in the U.S.

Robinson’s deep care for children’s lives shines through all of his unusually appealing, relevant, and beloved books. In describing the motivating belief behind his work, he says:

*“Children need to see themselves in books. They need to see their gender. They need to see their color, hair texture, their disability, themselves. Picture books are many children’s first introduction to the world. Seeing yourself is like a message. It’s saying, you matter, you are visible, and you’re valuable.”
(PBS News Hour, 2016)*

Biography

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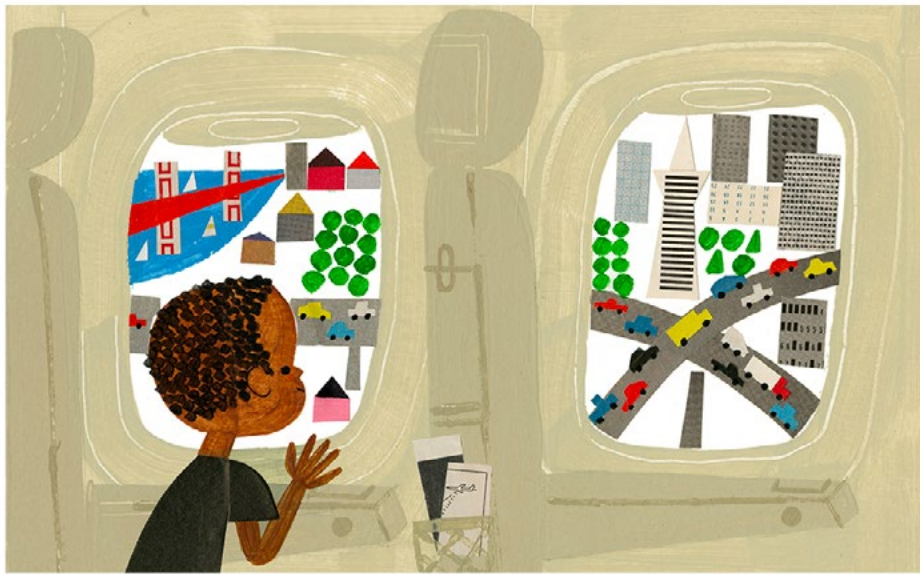
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Contribution to Literature for Young People



From *You Matter*, written and illustrated by Christian Robinson.

have been widely translated, and they have been named a BolognaRagazzi Honor Book as well as a finalist for the Kate Greenaway Medal.

As Dave Eggers noted in *The New York Times*, “Christian Robinson . . . has already established himself as one of the world’s pre-eminent picture book artists, with a spare paint-and-collage style that achieves a kind of witty, lyrical sublimity on every page. There are few awards Robinson has not won” (Eggers, 2020).

Robinson’s vibrant, mixed-media artwork, featuring elemental shapes in energetic compositions, is deceptively simple. As Linda Sue Park noted in a *New York Times* review of *Last Stop on Market Street*, written by Matt de La Peña, “Robinson’s. . . bright palette and flat perspective belie a sophisticated use of acrylic and collage” (Park, 2015). Each title reflects new artistic challenges as he employs varying materials and inventive perspectives that expand traditional storytelling. “I have the most fun by experimenting and trying all sorts of different mediums and techniques,” he says (Read Brightly). His influences are equally varied: “I’m a bit of a sponge, and my work is influenced and inspired by so many illustrators and painters that I love,” he says. “Illustrators like Ezra Jack Keats and Abner Graboff inspire me to play with collage and cut outs. Designers like Paul Rand and Bruno Munari inspire me to keep things simple and have fun. Artists like Picasso and Matisse push me to explore color and shapes. I could keep going on and on” (Fishink, 2014).

In his relatively young but remarkably prolific career, Christian Robinson has distinguished himself as one of the most active and admired illustrators of contemporary children’s books. He has received most of the top honors for children’s literature in the United States, including two Caldecott Honors, and his books are consistent favorites for “young reader” awards chosen by children themselves. Internationally, his books

Contribution to Literature for Young People



From *Harlem's Little Blackbird: The Story of Florence Mills*, written by Renée Watson and illustrated by Christian Robinson.

children of all backgrounds to see themselves and to explore the world with a sense of joy, wonder, and empowerment. He says:

"I think pictures are powerful. They are tools that are used to communicate. And so I feel a responsibility to tell stories that reflect experiences that look like mine, experiences that aren't often seen in picture books. So it's really important for me to create pictures that are empowering to as many different kids as possible" (Tolin, 2021).

His respect for children's inner lives informs every book he creates. "One of the things I love about children is just how observant they are," he says. "I feel like they're always taking in their environments and [are] really intuitive, actually reading the things . . . that sometimes the adults don't want to talk about. For me, it's important to just be honest with young people. I think that we do them a disservice when we're not having real discussions with them, giving them tools to process their experience, this world" (Murthy, 2022).



From *Rain!*, written by Linda Ashman and illustrated by Christian Robinson.

Contribution to Literature for Young People



Cover art from *Sunny Day: A Celebration of the Sesame Street Theme Song*, lyrics by Joe Raposo, illustrated by Christian Robinson and others.

That sense of honesty shapes the characters and environments he makes, including depictions of real urban neighborhoods. “It [is] very important to me to make sure that I [am] really showing how a city feels and looks. I want to capture that grit and that dirt. Not all books need to have tree-lined streets” (Robinson, 2016).

Part of Robinson’s genius is his ability to fold that frank realism into exuberant celebrations of family love, creativity, and even life itself. Many of his picture-book collaborations show children in difficult circumstances rarely seen in books for children. In an interview discussing *Milo Imagines the World*, written by Matt de La Peña, about a child who visits an incarcerated parent, Robinson says, “In this story and ... many of the books that [Matt and I] have worked on, we’re dealing with. . . . real world

situations. In *Carmela Full of Wishes*, it’s a daughter who has a parent who’s been deported. And in *Last Stop [on Market Street]*, at the end of the journey is a soup kitchen. . . . And all I’m doing is just reminding ... that, yeah, there’s challenges . . . but there’s also beauty. And there’s joy in all these experiences. And I think that’s what we’re trying to do, is just honor the lives of everyday people” (Balaban, 2021).

While Robinson’s work provides children with rare opportunities to see their own rarely told stories and to stretch their empathy, the messages are never overt. Rather, Robinson employs masterful, visual storytelling techniques to model supportive ways of viewing the world. In *Milo Imagines the World*, for example, young Milo draws as he travels by subway to visit his mother in prison, and his crayoned pictures are juxtaposed throughout the book with Robinson’s own images of Milo’s actions. The result is a richly complex reminder of the transformative power of love and art. In *The Horn Book*, a reviewer noted, “This poignant, thought-provoking story speaks volumes for how art can shift one’s perspectives and enable an imaginative alternative to what is...or seems to be” (Martin, 2021).

Contribution to Literature for Young People



From *Last Stop on Market Street*, written by Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson.

written by Traci N. Todd, “Robinson’s scenes and portraits absolutely sing with energy” (*Kirkus Reviews*, 2021). And of *Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker*, written by Patricia Hruby Powell, Kirkus wrote, “Robinson’s stunning acrylic paintings depict elongated figures and recreate Baker’s movements and costumes with verve and dynamism” (*Kirkus Reviews*, 2013).

Robinson has said that he chooses to depict individuals with whom he feels connections to his own life. With Josephine Baker, that connection was the simple reminder that, “Where you are from doesn’t necessarily determine where you’ll end up” (Robinson, 2016). He hopes that young people find similar connections and inspiration by learning about these figures—and from losing themselves in all his books.

“I want to let young people know that they have a certain amount of power, that they can create the life they want to see,” Robinson says. “And it begins with what’s in your head. What do you think about your life, about yourself?” (Tolin, 2021).

Contribution to Literature for Young People

Robinson's desire to create these empowering spaces for children stretches beyond the pages of his books and into real-life experiences, including school and library visits around the world. And during quarantine periods of the Covid-19 pandemic, when travel wasn't possible, Robinson developed a series of popular online programs to invite kids at home to explore their creativity. "If we can't go outside, let's go inside, into our imagination where anything is possible," he says in the first episode (Kirch, 2020).



From *Carmela Full of Wishes*, written by Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson.

The two books to date that Robinson has both written and illustrated are particularly concentrated examples of his playful artistry, his empowering messages, and the sophisticated layers beneath his seemingly simple style. Of his experimental, wordless book *Another*, about a girl and her cat who step through a portal to discover upside-down versions of themselves, Dave Eggers wrote in *The New York Times*, "The book, probably the most concise examination of the multiverse ever conceived, manages a balance of levity



From *Little Penguins*, written by Cynthia Rylant and illustrated by Christian Robinson.

and metaphysics that is uncanny. It can't be improved upon" (Eggers, 2020). *Kirkus Reviews* writes, "A fearless use of white space and an utter disregard of conventions of direction encourage readers to engage with the physical book as the story unfolds, touching and turning it as they literally take the narrative into their hands" (*Kirkus Reviews*, 2019). And *The Horn Book* noted, "Robinson's geometric precision combines with his flatout adorable collaged characters to make for a unique kind of enchantment. You'll find yourself rotating the book to try to put the story's sophisticated puzzle together" (Lambert, 2019).

Contribution to Literature for Young People



From *Harlem's Little Blackbird: The Story of Florence Mills*, written by Renée Watson and illustrated by Christian Robinson.

As *Kirkus Reviews* noted, “From the microscopic to the cosmic, word and image illuminate the message without a whiff of didacticism” (*Kirkus Reviews*, 2020)

The truth at the heart of *You Matter* extends to all of Robinson’s work, which glows with whimsical intelligence and celebratory warmth. Robinson’s books invite children to play, to learn, to make things, to stretch their minds and hearts, and, in the process, to recognize that wherever they are, whatever their experiences have been, they matter: they are an essential part of a vibrant, mysterious world. He says, “I think that’s what I want young people to know—that as crazy, as misfit, as unconventional, as strange as your story may feel, your life, your experience. . . . It’s beautiful, you know?” (Tolin, 2021).

In *You Matter*, Robinson created both the words and the images in a masterful book that celebrates the value of every living being and the beautiful webs that connect us all. *Publishers Weekly* wrote, “By seeing all life as intertwined—ancient and new, minuscule and gargantuan, ‘The first to go and the last./ The small stuff too small to see’—Robinson represents life as both interconnected and precious. It’s a profound thought expressed with singular focus and eloquence” (*Publishers Weekly*, 2020). In both text and art, Robinson adds transcendent meaning to the title.



From *Just in Case You Want to Fly*, written by Julie Fogliano and illustrated by Christian Robinson.

Contribution to Literature for Young People

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Appreciation: Creating Art That Matters, by Claire Kirch in *Publishers Weekly*, May 19, 2020



“I’ve finally found my own voice,” author-illustrator Christian Robinson says, explaining the genesis of both a project more than a year in the works, his latest picture book, *You Matter* (S&S/Atheneum), and a more spontaneous endeavor, a video series called “Making Space.” The series was prompted by Robinson’s desire to provide comfort to families that might be overwhelmed by the impact of the new coronavirus on their lives. “Making Space” debuted on Instagram in early April; *You Matter* will be released on June 2.

While *You Matter* is only the second picture book that Robinson has created both text and art for, he has illustrated 15 critically acclaimed picture books in total, beginning in 2012 with *Harlem’s Little Blackbird* by Renée Watson. Most notably, Robinson illustrated Matt de la Peña’s

Last Stop on Market Street, for which Peña received a Newbery Medal in 2016; Robinson’s illustrations received a Caldecott Honor and a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor award. The first picture book that Robinson both authored and illustrated, *Another* (S&S/Atheneum), which received a starred review in PW and was named a PW Best Book of 2019, is a wordless picture book about the dream journey of a girl and her cat.

“It’s a lot more work writing than illustrating,” Robinson admitted, “but I love telling stories—visually, and now with words.” He explained that *You Matter*, which received a starred review in PW, came about because he asked himself this question: “What is it that I most want to say? And the answer is ‘you matter.’ That is something I am always trying to say in everything I create.” The book’s message is that, however inconsequential, things matter to those who experience them, and what happens to any of us, and to our world, affects all of us.

According to Justin Chanda, senior v-p and publisher and Robinson’s editor, Robinson isn’t exaggerating in his claim that writing *You Matter* was more laborious than illustrating it. “The original title was *Small Problem*; the final book is very similar to, but also very different from the original,” Chanda said. “Christian’s new to writing, but not to illustrating. The illustrations remained the same. What changed was the text. It’s totally different.”

Describing the editorial process as “more of a conversation,” and “one of the most unique processes I’ve ever been through” in his more than 20-year career in publishing, Chanda recalled “long philosophical discussions” between the two of them “about the things that really matter in life, and how everything is interconnected. As soon as we figured it out [that all humanity is united], a book was born.”

Appreciation: Creating Art That Matters, by Claire Kirch in *Publishers Weekly*, May 19, 2020

Creating Art During a Pandemic

Locked down with his rescue greyhound, Baldwin, in his Sacramento home during the second phase of California's four-step reopening process, Robinson may not be venturing forth any time soon to promote *You Matter*. He admits that the cancellation of his tour is disappointing, as he enjoys "going out on the road, showing my work, and seeing how it connects" with his audiences. But, like so many other authors and illustrators during the coronavirus outbreak, Robinson is using technology to amplify his work by demonstrating his creative processes.

"Making Space," Robinson's video series, debuted on his Instagram account, @theartoffun, on April 4, and a new episode has been posted every week since then; there are seven episodes to date.

Each "Making Space" episode is between six and nine minutes and features a different theme, such as gratitude, friendship, and perseverance. In them, Robinson demonstrates a simple art activity inspired by that theme, repurposing common items found around any home. Several episodes feature special guests and all end with Robinson rewarding one engaged viewer with a book that relates to that week's theme. Most, though not all of the books given out are illustrated by Robinson.

Robinson also emphasizes each week that the book will be purchased from an indie bookstore, either a California indie that he shops at—Capital Books or Underground Books in Sacramento or Copperfield's in Petaluma—or else an indie selected by that week's winner (who is picked from those posting comments).

"I want to get my books out there, and I also want to support independent bookstores," Robinson said of his strategy in deciding which book to spotlight each week.

In the first episode of "Making Space," Robinson introduces the project by explaining that he believes that "creativity has the power to heal" and that "everyone has that creative spark within them" and that, "hopefully," the series will encourage his viewers to explore their inner artist. That episode received almost 10,000 engagements, including nearly 200 comments.

"If we can't go outside, let's go inside, into our imagination where anything is possible," he says in the video, adding in an interview with PW that his memories of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* inspired him to do something in response to the national shutdown.

Appreciation: Creating Art That Matters, by Claire Kirch in *Publishers Weekly*, May 19, 2020

“I was noticing all the helpers—the first responders, doctors, teachers, and even parents, who have so many new roles,” he said. “What could I do to contribute? Creativity has given me comfort during hard times.”

On Mother’s Day, May 10, the theme of “Making Space” was “caregivers.” Robinson demonstrated how to create a bouquet of flowers, using a paper bag, a fork, a spoon, and a toilet paper roll, along with paint. Robinson’s color palette—fuchsia, sea foam green, and white—were selected by his grandmother, who is shown speaking with him at the beginning of the episode through telephones made of tin cans and string.

The inspiration for that week’s project and its timing, Robinson explained, was a picture book that he illustrated, *Gaston* by Kelly DiPucchio, a tale about how a French bulldog and a French poodle learn the meaning of family. After promising a copy of the book to that week’s winner, Robinson called DiPucchio with his ersatz telephone and the two discussed the variations of family and what it means to be a caregiver.

“Not all families look exactly the same,” DiPucchio told Robinson in the video. “Family is really a feeling of belonging; families are places where you feel loved and accepted. And that goes for caregivers too. Caregivers aren’t just moms and dads and grandparents: caregivers are anyone who loves and accepts us unconditionally.”

Retrieved from:

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/83356-christian-robinson-creating-art-that-matters.html>

Appreciation: Artist Christian Robinson draws on his past for new book, 'Milo Imagines the World'

Artist Christian Robinson draws on his past for new book, 'Milo Imagines the World'

By Lisa Tolin, *Today*, Feb. 1, 2021

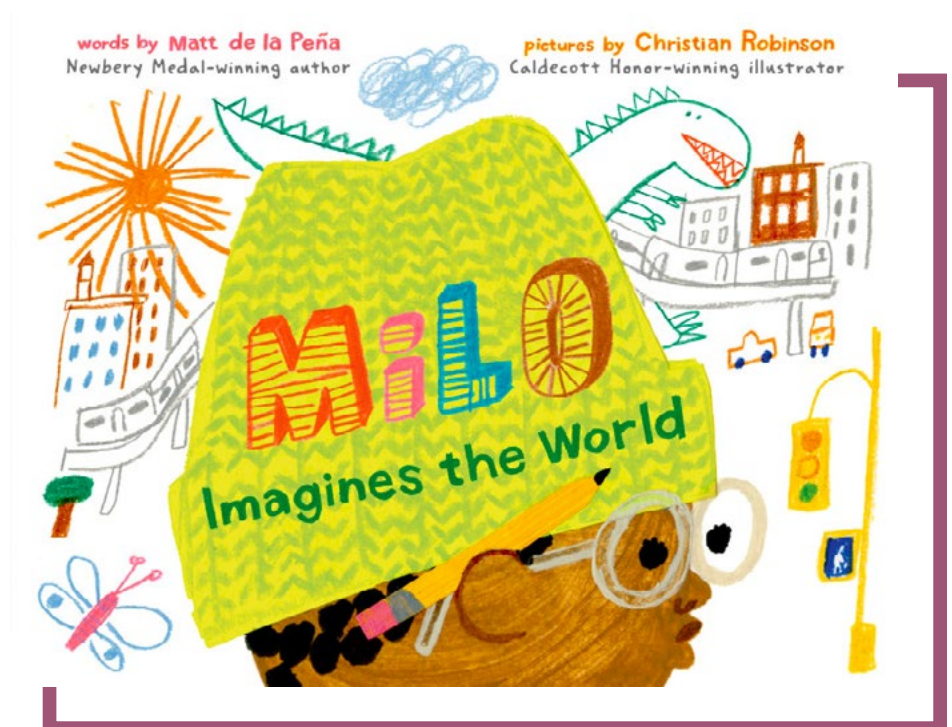
Christian Robinson is known for the whimsical art he creates for children's books, illustrations that radiate the joy of childhood.

But Robinson's own childhood was more complicated. It's a history he drew on for his new picture book with Matt de la Peña, "Milo Imagines the World." Like Robinson, Milo has an incarcerated parent. And like Robinson, Milo finds inspiration and beauty in his own imagination.

"Growing up, my mother was in prison for most of my childhood," Robinson told TODAY. "So yeah, Milo's story is my story."

When Robinson was 5 months old, his father left him and his older brother at their grandmother's one-bedroom Los Angeles apartment in the middle of the night. His grandmother Mary Lee, whom he calls Nana, said it was a shock to open her door and see him at 4 a.m.

"It was raining, pouring rain. And Christian was dressed in a diaper and his brother had a pair of shorts and a T-shirt," Lee told TODAY.



Appreciation: Artist Christian Robinson draws on his past for new book, 'Milo Imagines the World'



Christian Robinson at work in his studio. (photo credit: John Kwiatkowski)

Robinson and his brother, then 4, moved in with his Nana, two cousins and aunt. They only occasionally visited his mother, who struggled with addiction and mental health problems.

“We had limited space, limited means,” said Robinson, now 34. “But I like to say that where I found space was in creativity. Was in making pictures. Was in being able to imagine the kind of world that I wanted to see.”

That imagination started to bloom when Robinson was 4 years old and his great-grandmother, Lee’s mother, gave him a pencil and a grocery list.

“He drew little stick people of a mother, a father and this little—this tiny, tiny figure that was supposed to have been a child,” Lee said. “It was amazing. It was amazing. It gave me cold chills.”

Robinson never stopped drawing. If he saw a movie or TV show, he would run to recreate it and make it his own.

Appreciation: Artist Christian Robinson draws on his past for new book, 'Milo Imagines the World'

"I liked to just sort of get lost in this world that I was creating," he recalled. "Like, I might not live in a very big house, but I can draw myself my dream mansion with all my rooms and swimming pools and pets that I wanted."

During the pandemic, Robinson, now in Sacramento, saw kids struggling with quarantine and remote learning and reflected on what got him through his own tough times—creativity. He started an Instagram series for kids, "Making Space," with creative exercises to help them express their feelings.

"Milo Imagines the World" centers on a boy who creates stories about people around him on his way to visit his mother in prison. Robinson remembers his own visits as rare and emotional.

"I adored her. I admired her," he said. "It was very painful, every time she would, you know, fall into trouble and be taken away. And it always felt like a punishment. When someone you love is serving time, it feels like you're also serving time. You're also being punished."

He never saw his own story reflected in books growing up, and it wasn't until he went to school that he realized his experience was unusual. He said he internalized a sense of shame.

He calls illustrating Milo "a healing experience."

"I want to let young people know that they have a certain amount of power, that they can create the life they want to see," he said. "And it begins with what's in your head. What do you think about your life, about yourself?"

His publisher, Penguin Random House, is on track to donate 2,500 copies of the book to The unPrison Project's UP with Books program, a literacy campaign for children with mothers in prison.

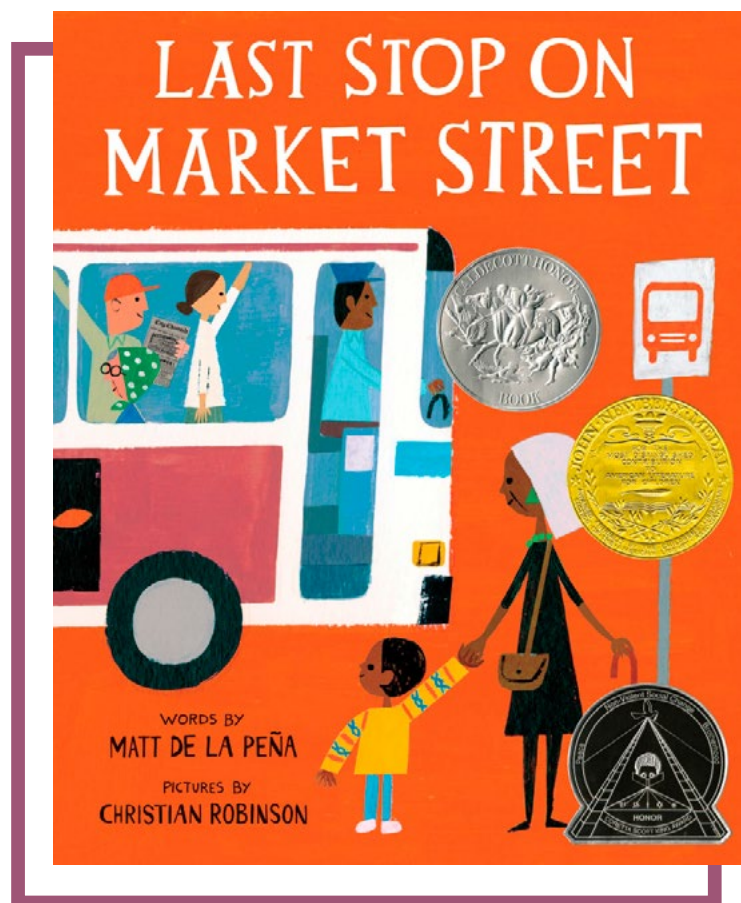
Robinson's pairing with de la Peña began with "Last Stop on Market Street," which won the Newbery medal for de la Peña and a Caldecott Honor for Robinson. With "Milo Imagines the World," they show the ways we judge others without knowing their stories.

"I think it's an incredible opportunity for empathy, to see somebody who might be sitting next to you in class who has that experience, and you'll understand their reality better," de la Peña told TODAY. "So I'm hoping that, more and more, books like 'Milo Imagines the World' are for all audiences, not just underprivileged audiences."

Appreciation: Artist Christian Robinson draws on his past for new book, 'Milo Imagines the World'

Robinson doesn't know where his mother is now. His family has not heard from her since the pandemic began. Last they knew, she was living on the streets of Los Angeles' Skid Row. He hopes that sharing his experience with children who may be going through something similar helps them know their stories matter.

"I think that's what I want young people to know — that as crazy, as misfit, as unconventional, as strange as your story may feel, your life, your experience, it isn't," he said. "It's beautiful, you know?"



Retrieved from:

<https://www.today.com/parents/christian-robinson-draws-childhood-milo-imagines-world-t207144>

Awards and Distinctions

BolognaRagazzi Awards

Nonfiction Honor Book

2014 *Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker*

The CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal

Finalist

2020 *Milo Imagines the World*

Newbery Medal

(Annual U.S. award administered by the American Library Association for the most distinguished children's book)

2016 *The Last Stop on Market Street*

Caldecott

(Annual U.S. award administered by the American Library Association for distinguished illustration in a children's book)

Honor

2022 *Milo Imagines the World*

2016 *The Last Stop on Market Street*

Coretta Scott King Award

(Annual U.S. award administered by the American Library Association to recognize outstanding African American authors and illustrators)

CSK Illustration Honor

2016 *The Last Stop on Market Street*

2015 *Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker*

Awards and Distinctions

Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Award

(Annual U.S. award administered by the American Library Association)

2015 *Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker*

ALA Notable Children's Books

(Annual list of distinguished children's titles administered by the American Library Association)

2022 *Nina: A Story of Nina Simone*

2022 *Milo Imagines the World*

2016 *Leo: A Ghost Story*

2015 *Gaston*

Notable Books for a Global Society

(Annual list administered by the International Literacy Association's Children's Literature and Reading Special Interest Group)

2022 *Nina: A Story of Nina Simone*

NCTE Orbis Pictus Award

(Annual U.S. award for outstanding nonfiction for children; administered by the National Council of Teachers of English)

2022 *Nina: A Story of Nina Simone*

NCTE/CLA Notable Children's Books in the Language Arts Award Winner

(Annual list of distinguished children's books selected by the Children's Literature Assembly, an organization of the National Council of Teachers of English)

2022 *Nina: A Story of Nina Simone*

2022 *Milo Imagines the World*

Awards and Distinctions

Bank Street Best Children's Books of the Year

(Annual list of best children's books, created by the Children's Book Committee of Bank Street College of Education)

- 2022 *Nina: A Story of Nina Simone*
- 2022 *Milo Imagines the World* (with an "Outstanding Merit" distinction; winner of Bank Street's Josette Frank Award)
- 2020 *Another* (with an "Outstanding Merit" distinction)
- 2020 *Just in Case You Want to Fly* (with an "Outstanding Merit" distinction)
- 2019 *Carmela Full of Wishes*
- 2017 *The Dead Bird* (with an "Outstanding Merit" distinction)
- 2017 *Little Penguins*
- 2016 *Last Stop on Market Street* (with an "Outstanding Merit" distinction)
- 2015 *Leo: A Ghost Story*
- 2014 *Rain!*
- 2013 *Harlem's Little Blackbird*

New York Times Best Illustrated Books

(Annual list of most notable children's book art published in the U.S.; administered by *The New York Times*.)

- 2019 *Another*
- 2016 *The Dead Bird*
- 2015 *Leo: A Ghost Story*

Awards and Distinctions

Additional Awards and Distinctions

Another

- 2019 Junior Library Guild Selection
- 2019 *Horn Book* Fanfare Selection
- 2019 Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature List
- 2019 NPR Favorite Book (National Public Radio)
- 2019 *New York Times* Best Children's Book
- 2019 NYPL Best Book (New York Public Library)
- 2019 *Publishers Weekly* Best Book
- 2019 *BookPage* Best Picture Book

Antoinette

- A 2017 Parents' Choice Silver Honor Winner
- Kansas NEA Reading Circle List Primary Title

Carmela Full of Wishes

- A *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of 2018
- A *Kirkus Reviews* Best Picture Book of 2018
- A *Boston Globe* Best Children's Book of 2018

The Dead Bird

- 2017 Recommended selection by *Cooperative Children's Book Center*

Gaston

- 2015 ILA Teachers' Choices Reading List award
- 2016-2017 Georgia Children's Book Award Finalist
- California Young Reader Medal Nominee
- CCBC Choices (Cooperative Children's Book Council)
- Kansas NEA Reading Circle List Primary Title
- Kentucky Bluegrass Award Master List
- South Carolina Picture Book Award Nominee
- Young Hoosier Book Award Nominee (IN)
- Buckaroo Book Award Nominee (WY)
- Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award Master List
- Colorado Children's Book Award Master List
- Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children's and Teens (DC)
- Show Me Readers Award Final Nominee (MO)
- Children's Choice Picture Book Award Master List (WA)

Awards and Distinctions

- Georgia Children’s Picture Book Award Finalist
- Golden Sower Award (NE)
- North Carolina Children’s Book Award Nominee
- Monarch Award Master List (IL)
- CBC Children’s Choice Book Award Finalist
- North Carolina Children’s Book Award
- Great Lakes Book Award
- MSTA Reading Circle List
- IL Monarch Readers’ Choice Book Award Winner
- Golden Sower Award Nominee (NE)
- Sunshine State Young Readers’ Award Jr. Nominee (FL)
- Goldfinch Award Nominee (IA)
- Prairie Bud Award (SD)
- South Dakota Children’s Book Award Nominee

Harlem’s Little Black Bird

- 2013 A Carter G. Woodson Elementary Honor Book (awarded by the National Council for the Social Studies)
- NCSS–CBC Notable Children’s Trade Books in the Field of Social Studies (Nominee and Selection)
- 2013 NAACP Image Awards Finalist
- 2013 Marion Vanett Ridgeway Honor

Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker

- 2014 Boston Globe–Horn Book Award, Nonfiction Honor
- *Wall Street Journal’s* 10 Best Children’s Books of the Year List
- 2014 Parent’s Choice Gold for Poetry

Last Stop on Market Street

- 2016 Charlotte Zolotow Award Honor Book
- 2015 A *New York Times Book Review* Notable Children’s Book
- 2015 A *Wall Street Journal* Best Children’s Book
- An NPR Best Book of the Year
- A New York Public Library 100 Books for Reading & Sharing Pick
- A Chicago Public Library Best Book of the Year
- *The Huffington Post* Best Overall Picture Book of the Year
- A *Boston Globe* Best Book of the Year
- A *Kirkus Reviews* Best Book of the Year
- A *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of the Year
- A *Horn Book* Best Book of the Year

Awards and Distinctions

- A *Miami Herald* Best Children's Book of the Year
- A *Raleigh News & Observer* Best Children's Book of the Year
- An *Atlanta Parent* Best Book of the Year

Leo: A Ghost Story

- *Publishers Weekly* Best Children's Books of 2015, Picture Books
- *The New York Times* 2015 Best Illustrated Children's Books
- *Kirkus Reviews* Best Children's Books of 2015, Picture Books
- 2015 Parents' Choice Book Awards: Picture Books, Gold
- *Booklist* Editors' Choice, 2015
- A *Boston Globe* Best Book of 2015
- Younger Readers 2015 Cybils Awards Nomination, Fiction Picture Books
- BuzzFeed's 17 of the Most Beautifully Illustrated Picture Books of 2015
- 2016 E. B. White Read-Aloud Award, Picture Book

Little Penguins

- Winner of the National Parenting Product Award

Milo Imagines the World

- A *New York Times* Best Book of the Year
- A *Parents Magazine* Best Book of the Year
- A *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of the Year
- A *Shelf Awareness* Best Children's Book of the Year
- A *Horn Book* Best Book of the Year
- A BCCB 2021 Blue Ribbon Book
- 2022 NCSS-CBC Notable Social Studies Trade Books List
- A Chicago Public Library Best Picture Book of the Year
- A New York Public Library Best Book of the Year
- BCALA Best of the Best 2021 Booklist
- A *Kirkus* Best Book of the Year
- A BCCB Blue Ribbon List Selection

Nina: A Story of Nina Simone

- 2022 NCTE Orbis Pictus Award Winner
- 2022 Jane Addams Children's Book Award Finalist
- 2022 ALA Rise: A Feminist Book Project List Pick
- 2022 NCSS-CBC Notable Social Studies Trade Book Pick
- 2021 *Publishers Weekly* Best Book
- 2021 *Kirkus* Best Book
- 2021 *Horn Book* Fanfare List Pick

Awards and Distinctions

- 2021 *Booklist* Editors' Choice
- 2021 New York Public Library Best Book Pick
- 2021 Chicago Public Library Best Book Pick
- 2021 Black Caucus American Library Association Best of the Best Booklist Pick

Rain!

- 2014 Ezra Jack Keats New Illustrator Award
- 2014 Maine Library "Cream of the Crop" list

You Matter

- Kansas NEA Reading Circle List Primary Title
- Texas 2x2 Reading List
- Northern California Book Award Nominee
- New York Public Library Best Books for Kids
- Keystone to Reading Elementary Book Award Reading List (PA)
- Sunshine State Young Readers Award Jr. List
- Colorado Children's Book Award Nominee

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- Barnett, Mac (author) & Robinson, Christian (illustrator). (2015). *Leo: A Ghost Story*. Chronicle Books, San Francisco, CA.
- Barnett, Mac (author) & Robinson, Christian (illustrator). (2023). *Twenty Questions*. Candlewick, Boston, MA.
- Brown, Margaret Wise (author) & Robinson, Christian (illustrator). (reissued with new illustrations in 2016.) *The Dead Bird*. HarperCollins, New York, NY.
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- de la Peña, Matt (author) & Robinson, Christian (illustrator). (2015). *Last Stop on Market Street*. Penguin Random House/Putnam, New York, NY.
- de la Peña, Matt (author) & Robinson, Christian (illustrator). (2021). *Milo Imagines the World*. Penguin Random House/Putnam, New York, NY.
- DiPucchio, Kelly (author) & Robinson, Christian (illustrator). (2017). *Antoinette*. Simon & Schuster/Atheneum. New York, NY.
- DiPucchio, Kelly (author) & Robinson, Christian (illustrator). (2014). *Gaston*. Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, New York, NY.
- Fogliano, Julie (author) & Robinson, Christian (illustrator). (2019). *Just in Case You Want to Fly*. Holiday House, New York, NY.
- Fogliano, Julie (author) & Robinson, Christian (illustrator). (2017). *When's My Birthday?* Macmillan/Roaring Brook, New York, NY.
- Meghan, Duchess of Sussex (author) & Robinson, Christian. (illustrator). (2021). *The Bench*. Random House Books for Young Readers, New York, NY.
- Powell, Patricia Hruby (author) & Robinson, Christian. (illustrator). (2013). *Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker*. Chronicle Books, San Francisco, CA.

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- Rex, Adam. (author) & Robinson, Christian. (illustrator). (2016). ***School's First Day of School***. Macmillan/Roaring Brook, New York, NY.
- Roberts, Justin (author) & Robinson, Christian. (illustrator). (2014). ***The Smallest Girl in the Smallest Grade***. Penguin Random House/Putnam, New York, NY.
- Robinson, Christian (author & illustrator). (2019). ***Another***. Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, New York, NY.
- Robinson, Christian (author & illustrator). (2020). ***You Matter***. Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, New York, NY.
- Rylant, Cynthia (author) & Robinson, Christian. (illustrator). (2013). ***Little Penguins***. Penguin Random House /Schwartz & Wade, New York, NY.
- Todd, Traci N. (author) & Robinson, Christian. (illustrator). (2021). ***Nina: A Story of Nina Simone***. Penguin Random House /Putnam, New York, NY.
- Watson, Renée (author) & Robinson, Christian. (illustrator). (2012). ***Harlem's Little Blackbird: The Story of Florence Mills***. Random House Books for Young Readers, New York, NY.

Translations

Antoinette

- Catalan: *Antoinette*. (2017). Andana, Algemesí, Valencia.
- Chinese, simplified: 贵宾犬小妮蒂. (2019). 河北出版传媒集团, Shijiazhuang.
- French: *Antoinette*. (2016). Hélicium, Paris.
- Spanish: *Antoinette*. (2017). Andana, Algemesí, Valencia.

Carmela Full of Wishes

- Chinese, simplified: 許什麼願望好呢.(2020). 遠見天下文化出版 ; 大和總經銷, 臺北市, [新北市新莊區], Taipei.
- Chinese, traditional: 許甚麼願望好呢.(2020). 遠見天下文化出版股份有限公司, Taipei.
- Korean: 카멜라의 행복한 소원. (2019). 비룡소, Söul.
- Spanish: *Los deseos de Carmela*. (2018). Penguin Random House/Putnam, New York.

The Dead Bird

- Catalan: *L'ocell mort*. (2018). Corimbo, Sant Joan Despí, Barcelona.
- Chinese, traditional: 跟小鳥道別 / Gen xiao niao dao bie. (2017). 玉山社出版事業股份有限公司, Taipei.
- Korean: 잘 가, 작은 새 : 세상 에서 가장 아름다운 장례식. (2017). 북 뱅크, Inch'ön Kwangyöksi.
- Spanish: *El pájaro muerto*. (2018). Corimbo, Sant Joan Despí, Barcelona.

Gaston

- Braille : *Gaston*. (2014). American Printing House for the Blind, Louisville, KT.
- Catalan: *Gastó*. (2014). Andana, Algemesí, Valencia.
- Chinese, simplified: 斗牛犬贾思登. (2015). 小熊出版, Taipei.
- Dutch: *Gaston*. (2022). Gottmer, Haarlem.
- French: *Gaston*. (2014). Helium, Paris.
- Italian: *Gastone*. (2017). Nord-Sud, Milano.
- Spanish: *Gastón*. (2014). Andana, Algemesí, Valencia.

Harlem's Little Black Bird

- Braille: *Harlem's Little Blackbird*. (2013). CNIB, Toronto.



Carmela Full of Wishes -
Chinese edition

Translations

Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker

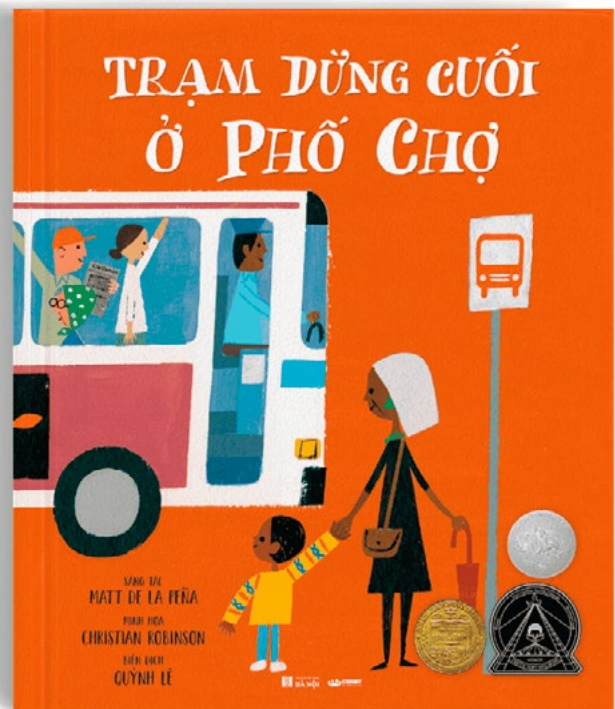
- French: *Joséphine: Joséphine Baker, la danse, la résistance et les enfants*. (2021, 2015). Rue du monde, Voisins-le -Bretonneux.

Just in Case You Want to Fly

- Chinese, simplified: 假如你想飞. (2021). 天地出版社, Chengdu.
- Chinese, traditional: 孩子, 帶著我的祝福飛吧!. (2019). Alvita Publishing, Taipei.
- Japanese: 空を飛びたくなったら. (2020). カワイイ研究所, Tokyo.
- Korean: 네가 날고 싶을 때를 위해. (2020). 미세기, Söul.
- UK edition: *Just in Case You Want to Fly*. (2020). Walker Books, London.

Last Stop on Market Street

- Braille: *Last Stop on Market Street*. (2015). Penguin Group (USA), New York; (2015) American Printing House for the Blind. Louisville, Kentucky.
- Catalan: *Última parada del carrer Market*. (2016). Corimbo, Sant Joan Despí, Barcelona.
- Chinese, simplified: 市场街最后一站. (2016). Zhong xin chu ban ji tuan gu, Beijing.
- Japanese: おばあちゃんとバスにのって. (2016, 2017). 鈴木出版株式会社, Tokyo.
- Korean: 행복을 나르는 버스. (2016). 비룡소, Söul.
- Persian: زور کی . (۱۳۹۶). ویئل نات ساد . تهران. ی سوبوتا.
- Spanish: *Última parada de la calle Market*. (2015, 2019). Corimbo, Sant Joan Despí, Barcelona.
- Vietnamese: Trạm dừng cuối ở phố chợ. (2021). Nhà xuất bản Hà Nội, Hà Nội.
- UK edition: *Last Stop on Market Street* (2017). Puffin Books, London.



Last Stop on Market Street -
Vietnamese edition

Translations

Leo: A Ghost Story

- Chinese, traditional: 為什麼你看不見里歐. (2016). 三采文化股份有限公司, Taipei.
- Italian: *Leo una storia di fantasmi* (2016). Terre di mezzo, Milano.
- Persian: ویل نات ساد (۱۳۹۶). می طاف. Tehran.
- Spanish: *Leo: el niño fantasma*. (2016). Editorial Santillana, S.A. de C.V., México, D.F. Mexico.

Little Penguins

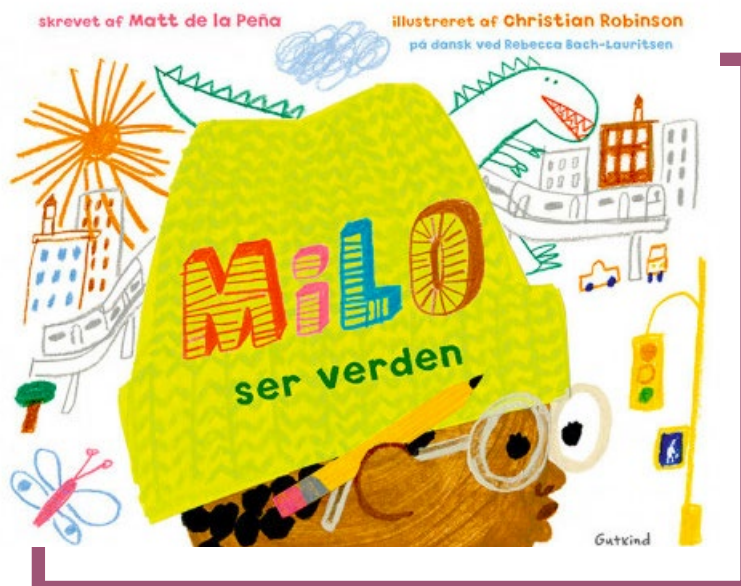
- Chinese, simplified: 小企鵝. (2018). 化学工业出版社, Beijing.



Leo: A Ghost Story - Persian edition

Milo Imagines the World

- Chinese, simplified: 米洛畅想世界. (2021). 中信出版集团股份有限公司, Beijing.
- Danish: *Milo ser verden*. (2021). Gutkind, Kbh.
- Japanese: マイロのスケッチブック. (2021). 鈴木出版, Tokyo.
- Spanish: *Milo imagina el mundo*. (2021) Penguin Random House /Putnam, New York.
- Spanish: *Milo imagina el mundo*. (2021). Libros del Zorro Rojo, Barcelona.
- UK edition: *Milo Imagines the World*. (2022). Two Hoots, an imprint of Pan Macmillan,



Milo Imagines the World - Danish edition

Translations

Rain!

- Chinese, simplified: 下雨啦! / Xia yu la! (2021) 中信出版集团股份有限公司, Beijing.
- French: *Il pleut.* (2014). Circonflexe, Paris
- Korean: 야! 비다 / Ya! Bida. (2016) Kūrimch'aek Kongjakso, Sōul.
- Japanese: おじさんとカエルくん / Ojisan to kaerukun. (2013) あすなろ書房, Tokyo.
- Spanish: ¡Lluvia!/Rain! (2019) HMH Books for Young Readers, Boston, MA..



Rain! - Japanese edition

School's First Day of School

- Braille: *School's First Day of School.* (2016). Roaring Brook Press, New York.
- Catalan: *El primer dia d'una escola.* (2017). Corimbo, Sant Joan Despí, Barcelona.
- Chinese, simplified: 学校的的第一天. (2018). 中信出版社, Beijing.
- Chinese, traditional. 開學了, 學校也好緊張! (2018). 遠見天下, Taipei.
- French: *L'école fait sa rentrée.* (2018). Little Urban, Paris.
- Greek: ΤΟ ΣΧΟΛΕΙΟ ΠΑΕΙ ΣΧΟΛΕΙΟ. (2017). Papadopoulos, Athens.
- Korean: 학교가 처음 아이들을 만난 날. (2019). 북뱅크, Inch'on Kwangyōksi.
- Persian: لایق تریب رشن. (۱۳۹۶). هسردم زور نی لوا, Tehran.
- Spanish: *El primer día de un colegio.* (2017). Corimbo, Barcelona.



School's First Day of School - Greek edition

The Smallest Girl in the Smallest Grade

- Chinese, traditional: 年紀最小的班級裡, 個子最小的女孩. (2016, 2018, 2020). 維京國際, Taipei.
- Chinese, simplified: 最低年級里个子最小的女孩. (2017). 北京联合出版公司, Beijing.
- Spanish: *La niña más pequeña de toda la escuela.* (2018). Alba, Barcelona.

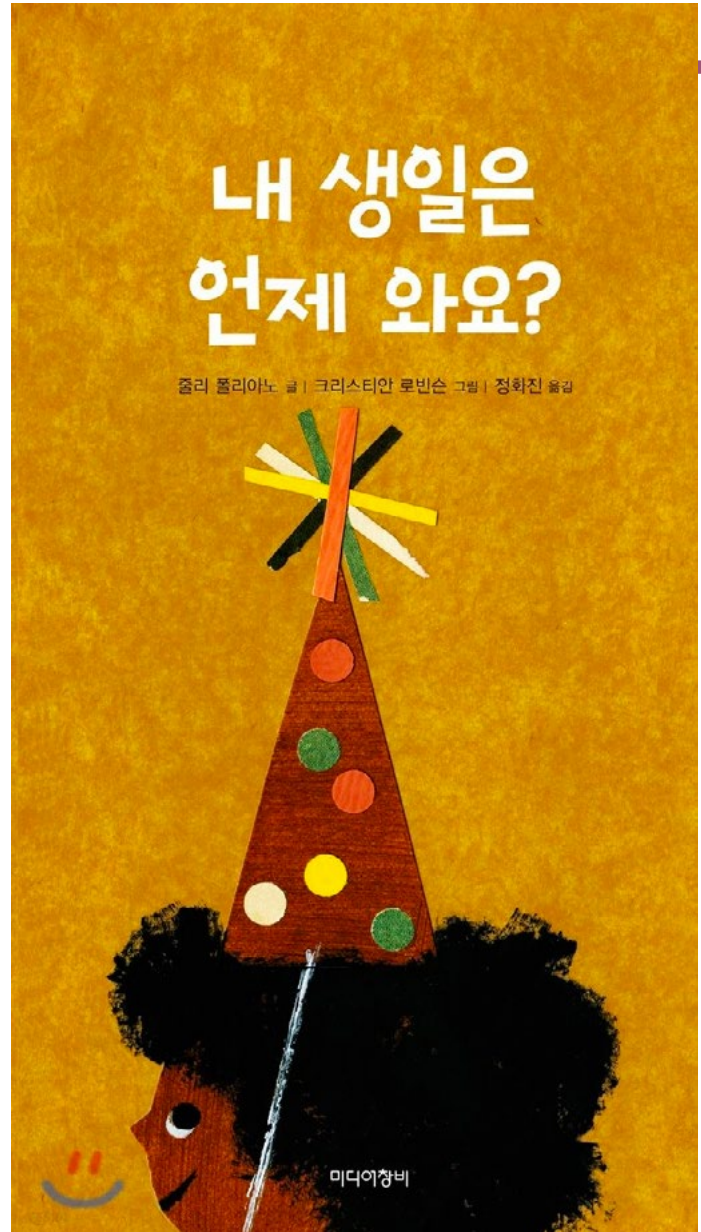
Translations

When's My Birthday

- Chinese, traditional: 我的生日是哪一天 (2019), 維京國際, 臺北市, Taipei.
- French: *Pour mon anniversaire.* (2018). Little urban, Paris.
- Japanese: おたんじょうびまだかな. (2022). 化学同人, Kyoto.
- Korean: 내 생일은 언제 와요. (2017). 미디어창비, 서울. Söul.
- Portuguese: *Hoje é o meu aniversário?* (2019). Gato Leitor, Água verde, Brasil.
- UK edition: *When's My Birthday?* (2018). Walker Books, London.

You Matter

- Braille: *You Matter* (2020). CELA, Toronto.
- Chinese, simplified: 你很重要. (2022). Xiao Mai Tian, China.
- French: *Toi aussi, tu comptes.* (2021). Hélium, Paris.
- German: *Du bist wichtig.* (2021). Cbj Verlang, Munchen.
- Spanish: *Tú importas.* (2020). Libros del Zorro Rojo, Barcelona.



When's My Birthday - Korean edition

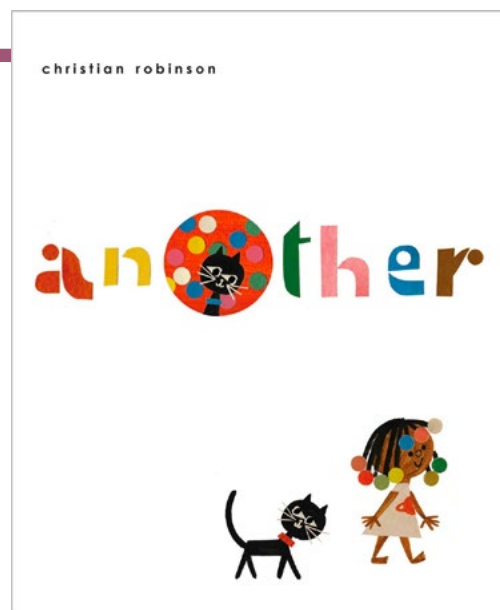
Ten Most Important Titles

Another

Written and illustrated by Christian Robinson

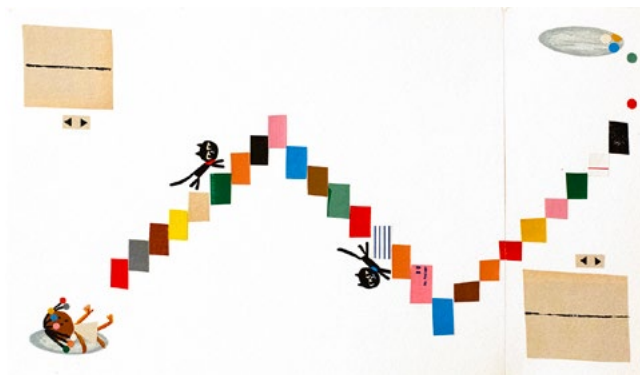
(2019) Simon & Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers

(2019) Simon & Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers, e-book

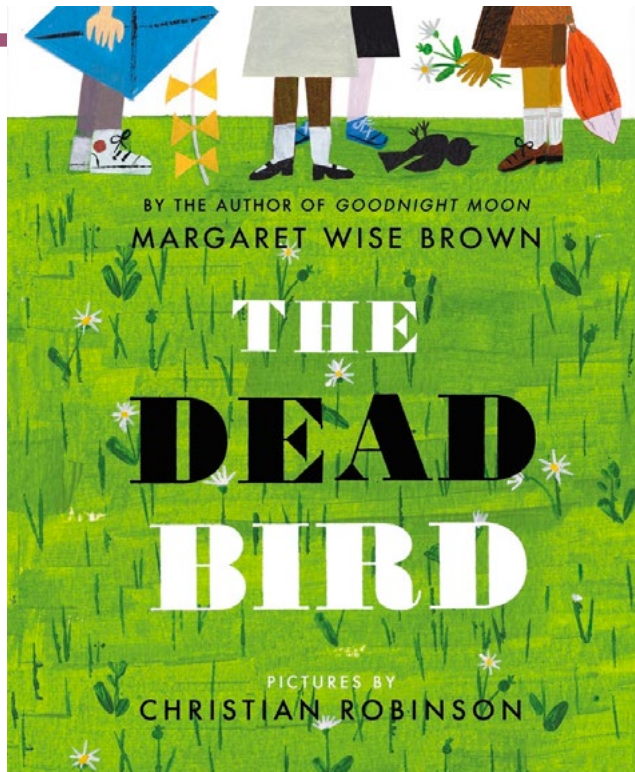


From *Another*, written and illustrated by Christian Robinson

From *Another*, written and illustrated by Christian Robinson



Ten Most Important Titles



The Dead Bird

Written by Margaret Wise Brown;
illustrated by Christian Robinson

(2016) HarperCollins, hardcover (Revised edition)

Then they cried because their singing was so beautiful and the ferns smelled so sweetly and the bird was dead.

They put dirt over the bird as they sang, and then they put more ferns and flowers and a gray stone on top of the dirt.



From *The Dead Bird*,
written by Margaret
Wise Brown and
illustrated by Christian
Robinson

Ten Most Important Titles

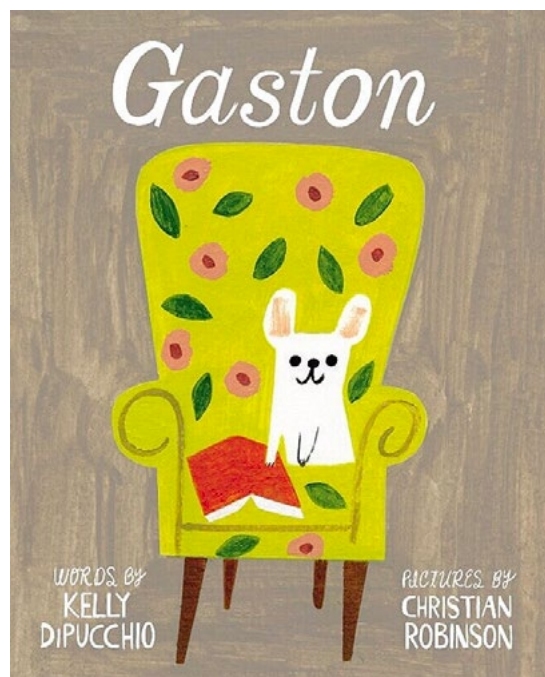
Gaston

Written by Kelly DiPucchio; illustrated by Christian Robinson

(2014) Simon & Schuster/Atheneum

(2014) Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, e-book

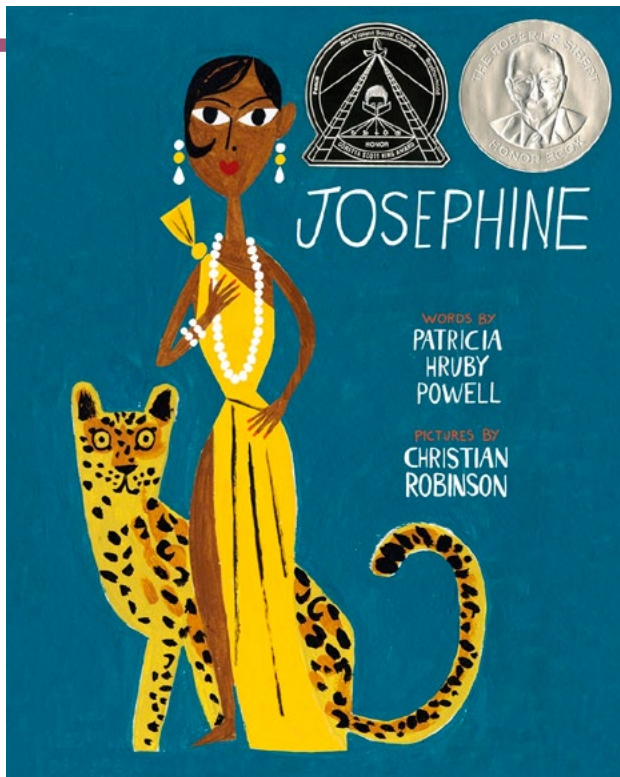
(2016) Scholastic, paperback



And many years later, when **Gaston** and **ANTOINETTE** fell in love and had puppies of their own, they taught them to be whatever they wanted to be.

From *Gaston*, written by Kelly DiPucchio; illustrated by Christian Robinson

Ten Most Important Titles



Josephine

Written by Patricia Hruby Powell;
illustrated by Christian Robinson

(2014) Chronicle Books

(2014) Chronicle Books, e-book

(2014) Recorded Books, digital audiobook

(2014) Recorded Books, CD audiobook

From *Josephine*,
written by Patricia
Hruby Powell and
illustrated by Christian
Robinson

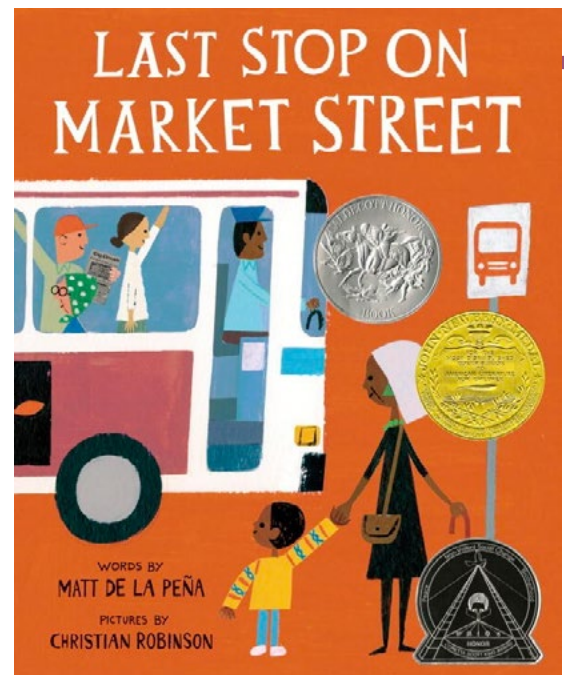


Ten Most Important Titles

Last Stop on Market Street

Written by Matt de la Peña; illustrated by Christian Robinson

- (2015) Penguin Random House/Putnam
- (2015) Penguin Random House/Putnam, e-book
- (2015) Recorded Books, Inc., CD audiobook
- (2015) Recorded Books, Inc., digital audiobook

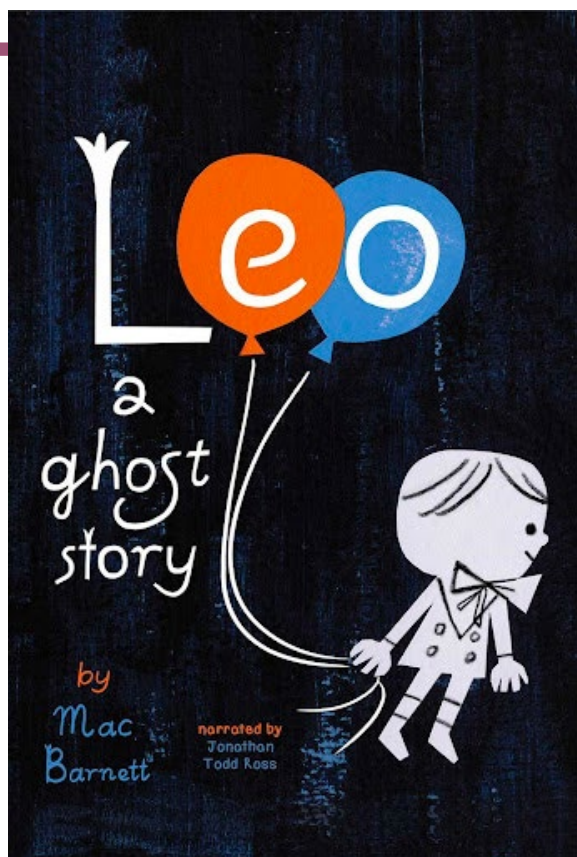


From *Last Stop on Market Street*, written by Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson

From *Last Stop on Market Street*, written by Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson



Ten Most Important Titles



Leo: A Ghost Story

Written by Mac Barnett; illustrated by Christian Robinson

(2015) Chronicle

(2015) Chronicle, e-book

(2021) Chronicle, paperback

(2016) Recorded Books, digital audiobook

(2016) Recorded Books, CD audiobook



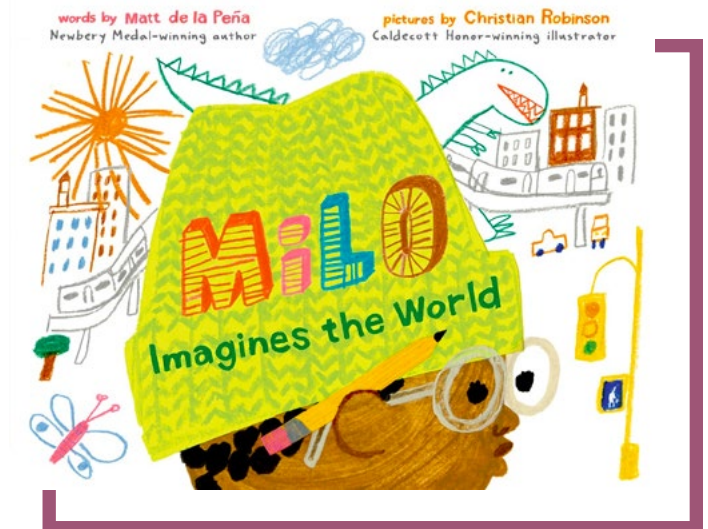
From *Leo: A Ghost Story*, written by Mac Barnett and illustrated by Christian Robinson

Ten Most Important Titles

Milo Imagines the World

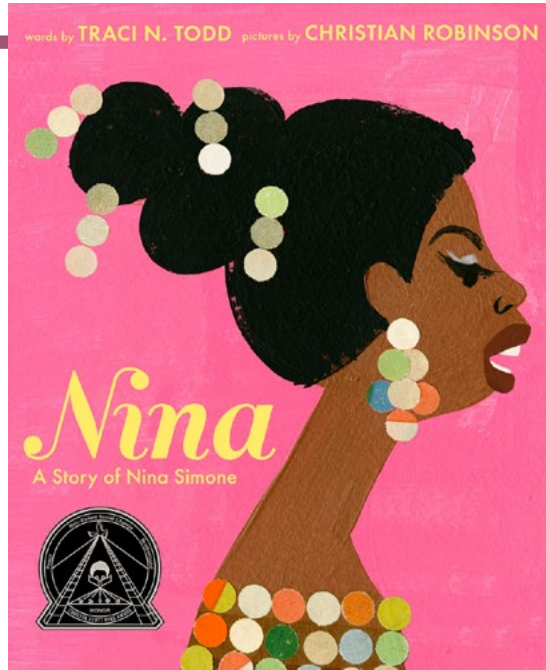
Written by Matt de la Peña; illustrated by Christian Robinson

- (2021) Penguin Random House/Putnam
- (2021) Penguin Random House/Putnam, e-book
- (2021) Penguin Random House, digital audiobook



From *Milo Imagines the World*, written by Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson

Ten Most Important Titles



Nina: A Story of Nina Simone

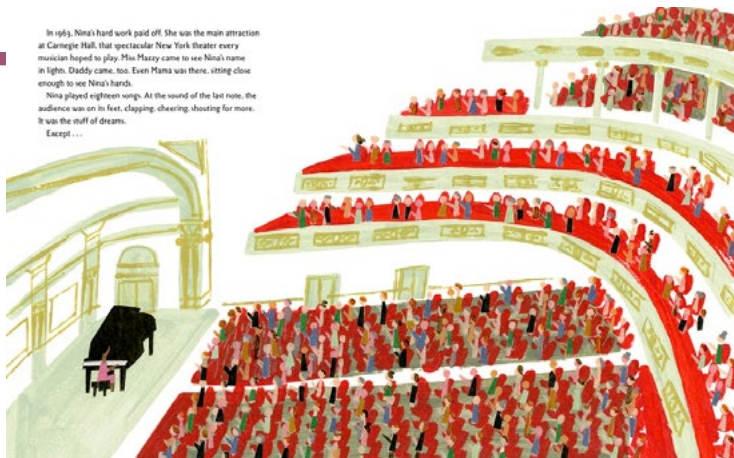
Written by Traci N. Todd; illustrated by Christian Robinson

(2021) Penguin Random House/Putnam

(2021) Penguin Random House/Putnam, e-book

(2021) Penguin Random House, digital audiobook

From *Nina: A Story of Nina Simone*, written by Taci N. Todd and illustrated by Christian Robinson



In 1943, Nina's hard work paid off! She was the main attraction at Carnegie Hall, that spectacular New York theater every musician hoped to play. *Mus Mazy* came to see Nina's name in lights. *Daddy* came, too. Even *Mama* was there, sitting close enough to see Nina's hands.
Nina played eighteen songs. At the sound of the last note, the audience was on its feet, clapping, cheering, shouting for more. It was the stuff of dreams.
Except . . .



From *Nina: A Story of Nina Simone*, written by Taci N. Todd and illustrated by Christian Robinson

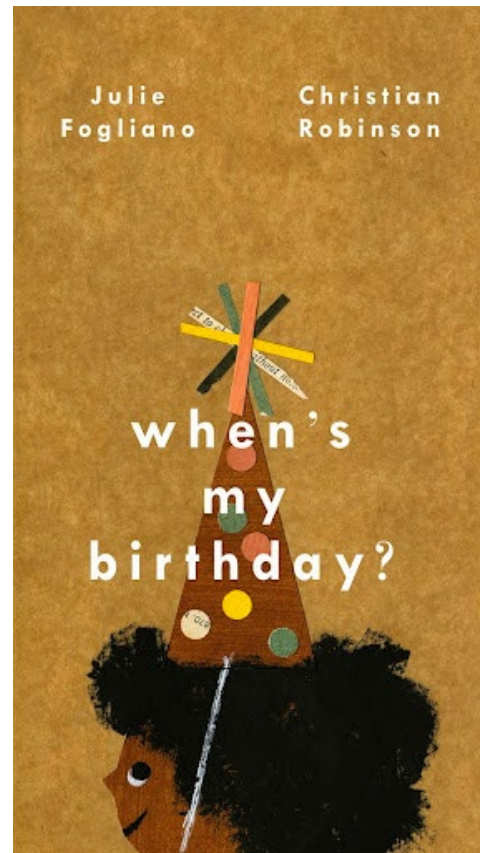
Ten Most Important Titles

When's My Birthday

Written by Julie Fogliano; illustrated by Christian Robinson

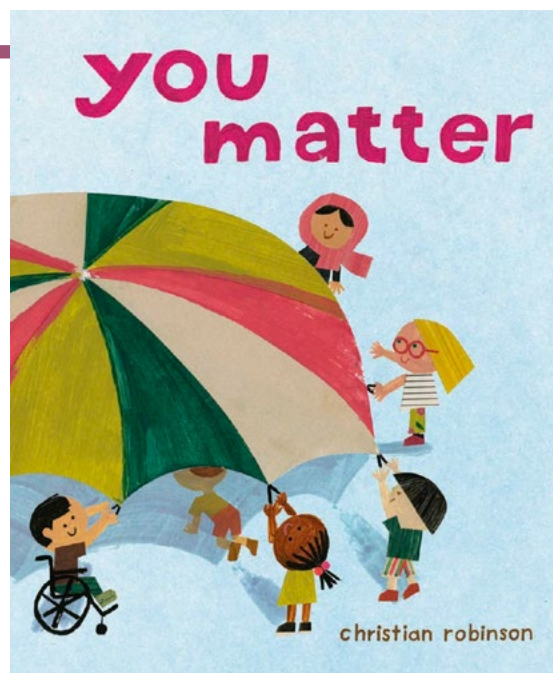
(2017) Macmillan/Roaring Brook

(2017) Macmillan/Roaring Brook, e-book



From *When's My Birthday*, written by Julie Fogliano and illustrated by Christian Robinson

Ten Most Important Titles

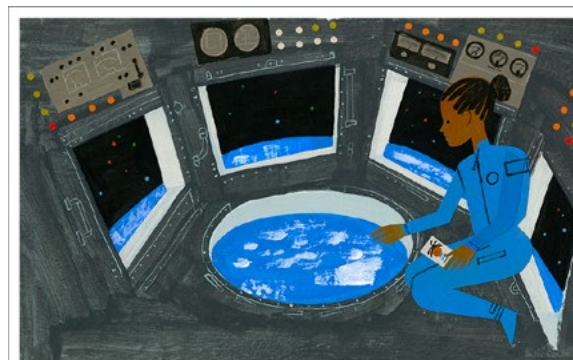


You Matter

From *You Matter*, written and illustrated by Christian Robinson

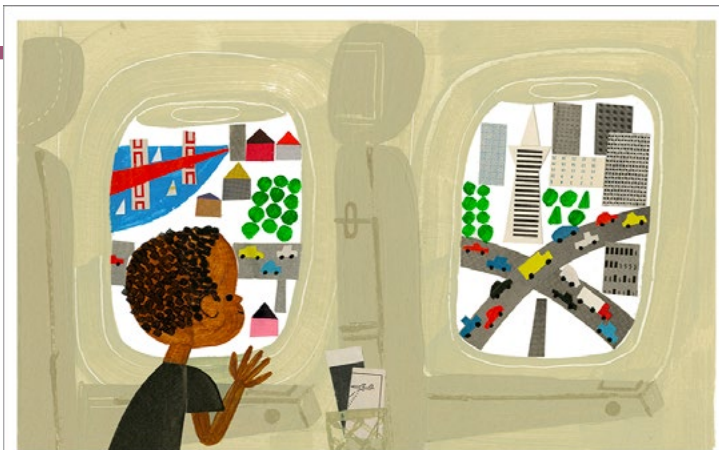
(2020) Simon & Schuster/Atheneum

(2020) Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, e-book



From *You Matter*, written and illustrated by Christian Robinson

From *You Matter*, written and illustrated by Christian Robinson

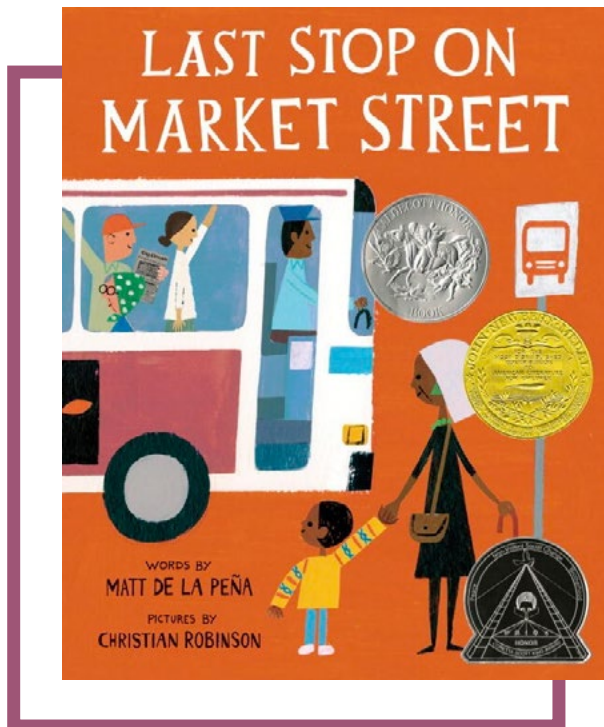
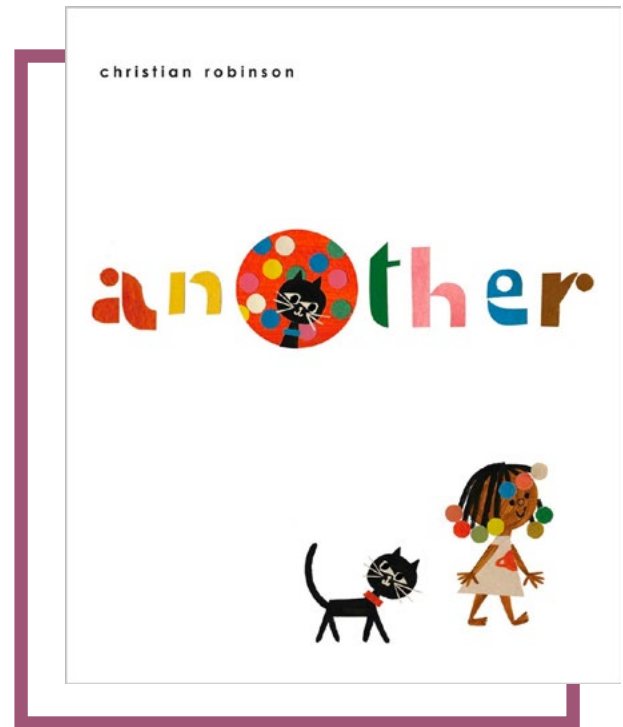


Five Representative Titles

Another

Written and illustrated by Christian Robinson

(2019) Simon & Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers



Last Stop on Market Street

Written by Matt de la Peña; illustrated by Christian Robinson

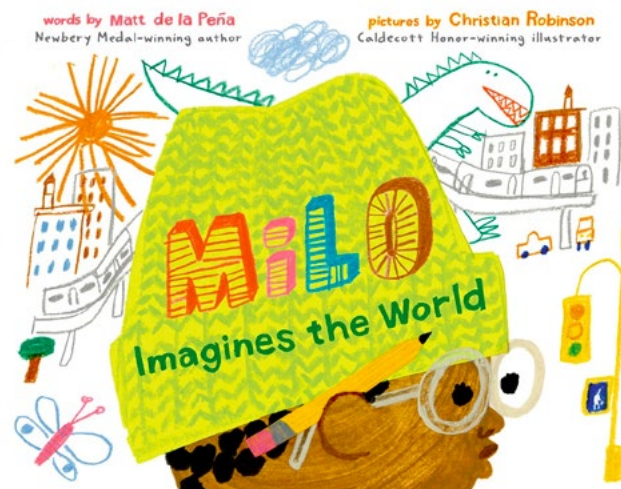
(2015) Penguin Random House/Putnam

Five Representative Titles

Milo Imagines the World

Written by Matt de la Peña; illustrated by Christian Robinson

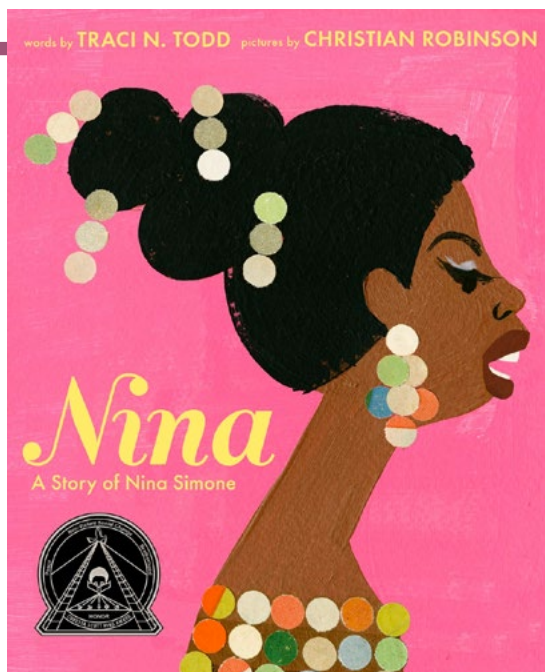
(2021) Penguin Random House/Putnam



Nina: A Story of Nina Simone

Written by Traci N. Todd; illustrated by Christian Robinson

(2021) Penguin Random House/Putnam

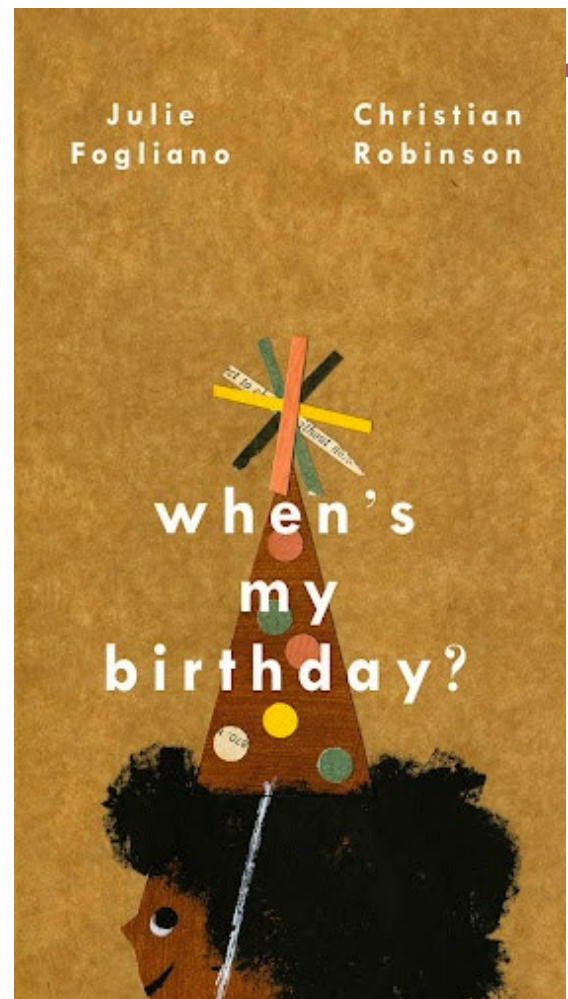


Five Representative Titles

When's My Birthday

Written by Julie Fogliano; illustrated by Christian Robinson

(2017) Macmillan/Roaring Brook



Reviews of Submitted Titles

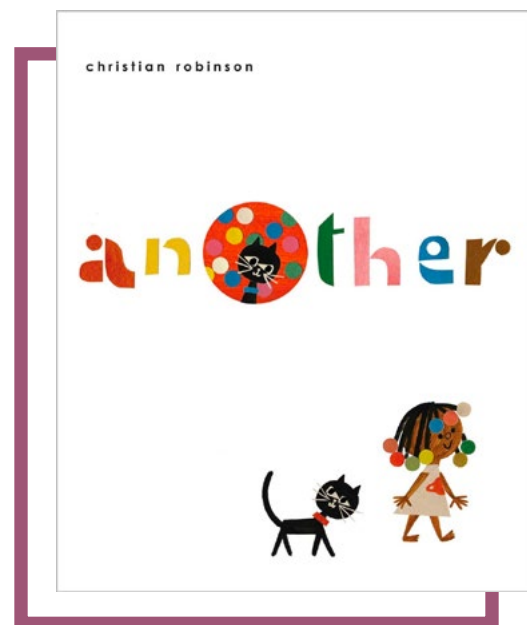
Another

School Library Journal

Both beautiful and fanciful, this wordless picture book recounts the dream journey of a little girl and her cat. As she slumbers, a portal of light appears in her bedroom, and an identical black cat—with a blue rather than red collar—appears. The visitor pounces on a red toy mouse, which he snatches as he runs back from whence he came. The girl's cat follows him with his owner, now wide awake, close behind. They encounter an undulating staircase, a roomful of colorful balls, and a bright, stripy treadmill, in a world with children of all backgrounds playing together. Hobby horses, hula hoops, sidewalk drawings, jump ropes, bubbles, and books occupy the happy youngsters. Here the girl meets her alternate self in an almost identical nightshirt—sporting a blue, rather than red planet. The other child pets her cat and retrieves the coveted red mouse, tossing it to its rightful owners. They say goodbye and return through their respective portals, back to their own worlds. The girl sleeps again; the cat rests on the bed with his toy. All is as it was. Or is it? Was that blue mouse on the floor always there? Vibrant shapes reminiscent of Paul Klee or Piet Mondrian fill the pages. In the bedroom world, the background is black, while the dream world is set against stark white. The endpapers are painted a deep blue with planets, stars, and moons. VERDICT: A work of art and celebration of childhood for all libraries.

Kirkus Reviews

A young child discovers a portal to a whole other plane of perspective in Robinson's latest. In the dark of night, a portal opens in a small girl's bedroom, the light attracting her cat. When the curious feline crawls through to chase another cat that looks just like it (but with a different color collar), the little girl cannot help but follow as well. Through the portal, the world goes topsy-turvy—up is down, right is left, and color and shape capriciously collide as the ever-smiling girl and her cat move from plane to plane. The duo eventually happens upon other children, all playing with alternate versions of themselves, and after a few page turns, our protagonist—a girl of color with black, beaded braids—spots her alternate self as well. The pair share a few meaningful moments, exchanging smiles and cat toys, until eventually each returns to her bed with the small promise of further adventures to come. The simple geometry of Robinson's work comes alive in this expanse of wordless narrative. A fearless use of white space and an utter disregard of conventions of direction encourage readers to engage with the physical book as the story unfolds, touching and turning it as they literally take the narrative into their hands. A bright, open primer for Escher.



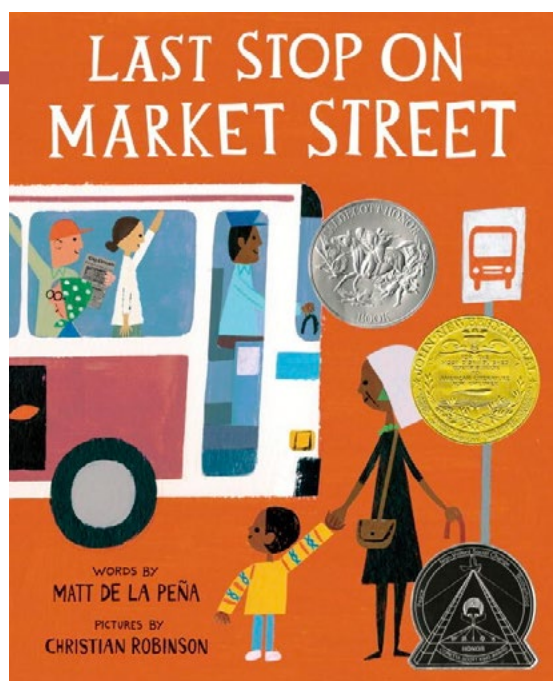
Reviews of Submitted Titles

Last Stop on Market Street

Kirkus Reviews

A young boy yearns for what he doesn't have, but his nana teaches him to find beauty in what he has and can give, as well as in the city where they live. CJ doesn't want to wait in the rain or take the bus or go places after church. But through Nana's playful imagination and gentle leadership, he begins to see each moment as an opportunity: Trees drink raindrops from straws; the bus breathes fire; and each person has a story to tell. On the bus, Nana inspires an impromptu concert, and CJ's lifted into a daydream of colors and light, moon and magic. Later, when walking past broken street lamps on the way to the soup kitchen, CJ notices a rainbow and thinks of his nana's special gift to see "beautiful where he never even thought to look." Through de la Peña's brilliant text, readers can

hear, feel and taste the city: its grit and beauty, its quiet moments of connectedness. Robinson's exceptional artwork works with it to ensure that readers will fully understand CJ's journey toward appreciation of the vibrant, fascinating fabric of the city. Loosely defined patterns and gestures offer an immediate and raw quality to the Sasek-like illustrations. Painted in a warm palette, this diverse urban neighborhood is imbued with interest and possibility. This celebration of cross-generational bonding is a textual and artistic tour de force.



Horn Book

CJ, a young black boy, has a flurry of questions for his grandmother one rainy day: "How come we gotta wait for the bus in all this wet?" "How come we don't got a car?" "How come we always gotta go here after church?" Only at book's end do readers learn that "here" is a soup kitchen in a hardscrabble part of town ("How come it's always so dirty over here?") where CJ and Nana work every Sunday. Nana has a bottomless supply of look-

on-the-sunny-side answers ("Sometimes when you're surrounded by dirt, CJ, you're a better witness for what's beautiful"), but she isn't dispensing bromides; the economical, exquisitely composed collage illustrations showing the pair in a glamour-free urban setting forbid a glib reading. (continued on p. 48)

Reviews of Submitted Titles

Last Stop on Market Street

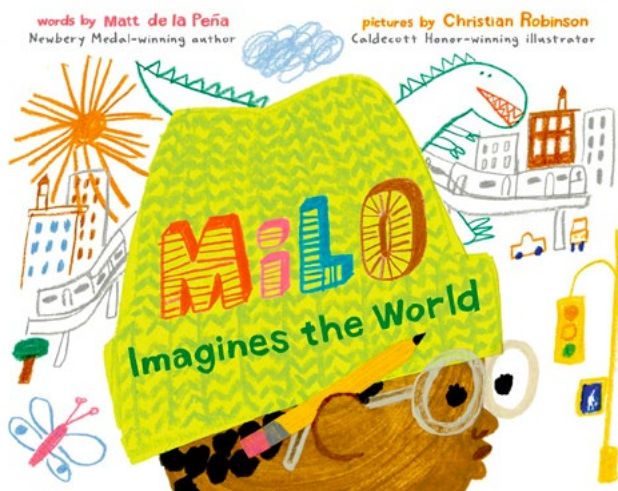
Horn Book Continued.

CJ and Nana develop a fellowship with the bus driver, Mr. Dennis, and with the other passengers (a blind man and his dog; an old woman holding a jar of butterflies; a man playing the guitar), and it takes just a gentle nudge from Nana for CJ to unhesitatingly drop the coin Mr. Dennis gave him into the musician's hat. De la Peña and Robinson here are carrying on for Ezra Jack Keats in spirit and visual style. This quietly remarkable book will likely inspire questions of a sort less practical-minded than CJ's; it will also have some adult readers reaching for a tissue.

Milo Imagines the World

Horn Book

Harold and the Purple Crayon meets twenty-first-century urban realism in this picture book by the *Last Stop on Market Street* author-illustrator team (simultaneously published in Spanish as *Milo imagina el mundo*). Milo, a diminutive brown-skinned boy with round glasses and a lime-green hat, boards a subway train with his big sister. While she plays games on her phone, Milo studies people and imagines lives for them through his notebook and colored pencils. Robinson's art alternates between color-saturated, double-page-spread scenes of train activity and Milo's sketches. Milo sees a boy wearing a suit and draws him as a prince arriving at his castle; for a wedding-gown-clad passenger, Milo draws her imagined ceremony. He then reimagines and re-illustrates many of his scenes, intentionally looking at his subjects in a different way. Milo and his sister finally reach their destination: a detention center, where they visit their incarcerated mother (the boy on the subway who was wearing a suit is visiting someone, too). As in Jacqueline Woodson's picture book *Visiting Day*, the joy and parent-child love shine through, and the climax comes with Milo's sharing of a special drawing he has created for his mother. This poignant, thought-provoking story speaks volumes for how art can shift one's perspectives and enable an imaginative alternative to what is...or seems to be.

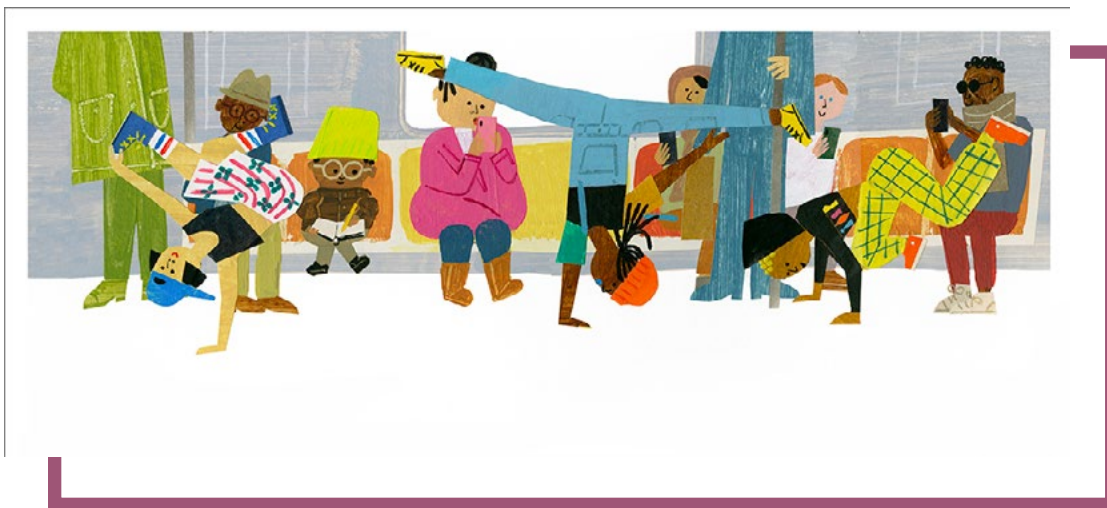


Reviews of Submitted Titles

Milo Imagines the World

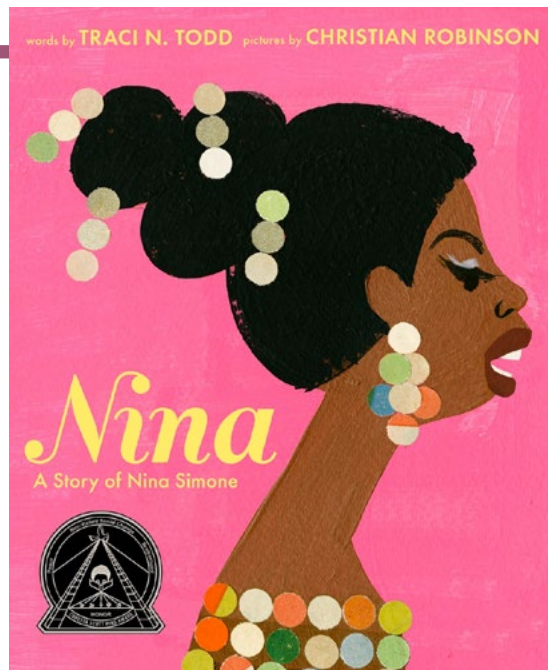
Booklist

It's not uncommon for picture books to spotlight a curious kid who wonders what exciting things are going on behind closed doors, but de la Peña and Robinson's *Milo* spends a subway ride imagining and drawing the lives of the people he sees in his train car. Milo, a small, bespectacled Black boy with a yellow knit cap, immediately wins readers' hearts as he fills his sketchbook with imagined scenarios that he proudly shows to his older sister. Robinson intersperses scenes of his signature cut-paper collage artwork, bustling with vibrant activity and a wide array of people (a blue-haired bride, a grumpy man with a crossword puzzle, a trio of break-dancers) with images of Milo's sketchbook, and the child-like drawings in thick crayon lines not only give insight into his imagination but his heart. One scene, in which the break-dancing boys are scowled at by a doorman, ends with a frustrated scribble: "Milo doesn't really like this picture." He reassesses his drawings, however, after a white boy in a suit and brand-new sneakers—clearly a prince—surprises Milo by having the same destination as he does: visiting day at a correctional facility. This reveal is likely to catch many readers in their own assumptions about Milo, reinforcing—without critique—the notion that you can't know someone simply by looking at them. An excellent conversation-starter for modern times.



From *Milo Imagines the World*, written by Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson

Reviews of Submitted Titles



Nina: A Story of Nina Simone

Booklist

Nina Simone's beauty and talent is given prominent expression by multi-award-winning Robinson in this picture-book biography. With artwork highlighting the musician's profile, Robinson emphasizes Simone's noble stature as a musician who combined her love of classical music with church standards and jazz to create a unique style that soared to prominence alongside her dedication to the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Often shown facing her piano, whether on her father's lap or at Carnegie Hall, the woman born as Eunice Kathleen Waymon is always foremost in the images, while Todd's prose eloquently tells her story from childhood to fame. Woven through the narrative is Simone's lifelong awareness of the injustices Black Americans faced, from watching her parents forced out of the front row to make room

for a white couple during a childhood recital in her hometown to learning from prominent friends about the tumult and violence faced by Black people in the south as the movement for equality gained steam. Robinson's illustrations subtly portray the subject's transformation, particularly in her clothes, which gradually move from more subdued dresses to her bold, colorful, and Afrocentric signature style. In her end material, Todd provides additional biographical details for readers interested in gleaning more about the renowned woman. A worthy biography for all collections and especially for those that serve music-loving children.

Kirkus Reviews

This biography of African American icon Nina Simone follows the development of her early musical talent to her popularity as a musician during the civil rights movement. Born in North Carolina in 1933, Eunice Kathleen Waymon "sang before she could talk and found rhythm before she could walk." Her mama, a minister, sang only church songs, and her daddy played the upright piano, teaching Eunice to play jazz when Mama was out. From the age of 3, Eunice played music at church while Mama preached. Eunice's gift was undeniable, and the White woman Mama cleaned for during the week helped arrange music lessons, where Eunice learned classical piano, falling in love with Bach's music. After high school, Eunice went to New York City to attend the Juilliard School of Music. (continued on p. 51)

Reviews of Submitted Titles

Nina: A Story of Nina Simone

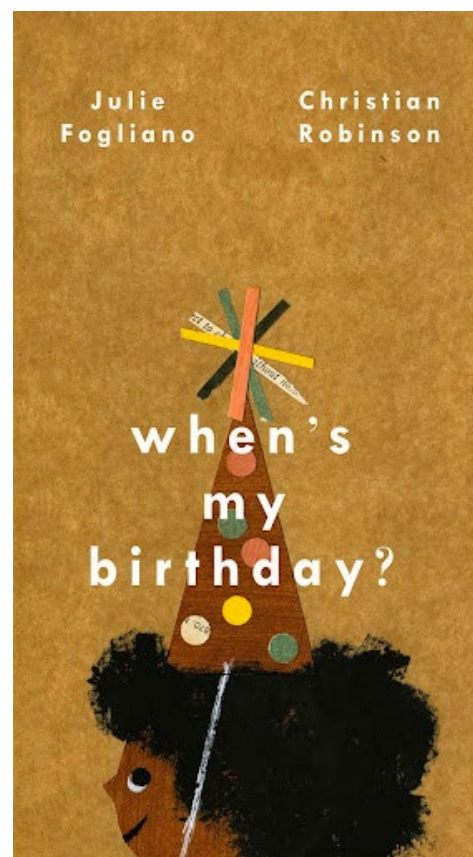
Kirkus Reviews Continued

But when she auditioned for a transfer to the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, she was not accepted, and she felt her dream of being a musician slipping away. When she took jobs in nightclubs, she performed as Nina Simone to keep her mother from discovering her secret. The narrative includes details of the love and support of family and community that gave Nina her early start, the disappointments and humiliations she suffered because of racism, and the determination and sheer love of music and of her people that carried her to success despite the setbacks. Todd's musical prose allows readers into Nina's perspective, and Robinson's scenes and portraits absolutely sing with energy, keeping pace perfectly with the text as it expands beyond typical picture-book length. Do not miss this complex story of an American legend.

When's My Birthday

Booklist

In an infectious, bouncy rhythm, Fogliano playfully captures the antsy excitement for birthdays in a pitch-perfect kid voice. In between a refrain of "When's my birthday? / Where's my birthday? / How many days until / my birthday?," Fogliano's verses cover food and presents, who to invite, and, of course, the all-important cake. Robinson's thickly painted collage illustrations feature cheery children and friendly creatures in birthday hats, with always happy faces enjoying the delights described in Fogliano's lines. Amid all the anticipation and happy planning, the text takes a realistically worried turn when the waiting seems so endless that the narrator wonders whether he or she will have a birthday at all. Luckily, after a near-sleepless night, the day finally arrives: "It's the daytime! / Here's my birthday! / Happy happy! / Hee! Hee! Hee!" Robinson's signature style of bold collages depicting kids and animals in blocky shapes is the ideal vehicle for Fogliano's frolicsome text, and the two together evoke a quintessentially childlike glee, which adults will recognize and little ones will revel in. There might be a more perfect picture book about birthdays out there, but you'd be hard-pressed to find it.

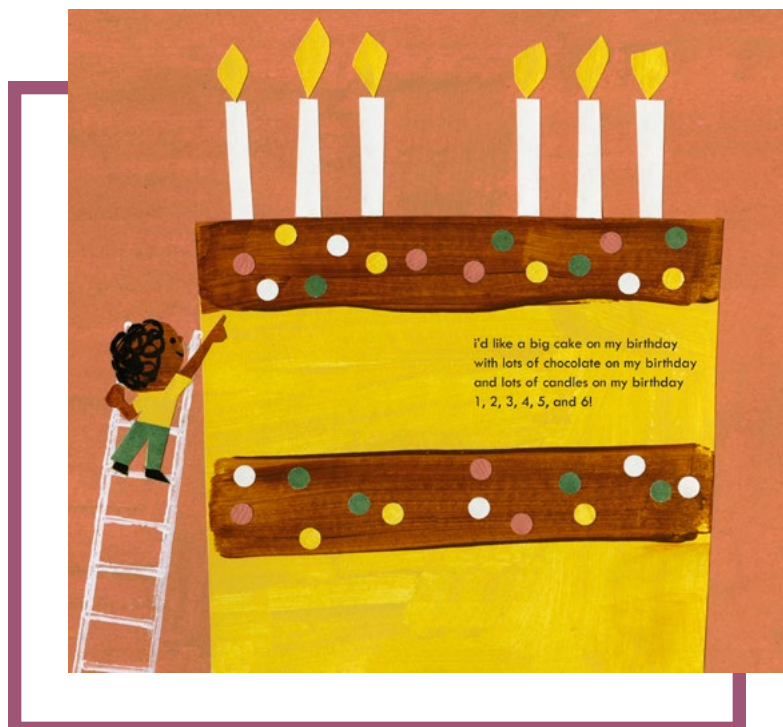


Reviews of Submitted Titles

When's My Birthday

School Library Journal

An exuberant ode to children's anticipation for the most special day each year: their birthday. Fogliano's insistent verse wastes no time and doesn't even stop for traditional capitalization, just like the young narrators, who want to know, "when's my birthday?/where's my birthday?/ how many days until/my birthday?" They continue breathlessly, wondering if they will "sing so happy happy?" on the big day. The exaggerated excitement is echoed in Robinson's clever use of scale, as in a spread featuring a gigantic present tied with white twine. A little girl reaches up to pull the string, dwarfed by its size. The long and tall trim size is also ideal for displaying a towering, swimming pool-size birthday cake so large that the young birthday boy needs a ladder to reach the candles. A muted palette of slate blue, mustard yellow, forest green, and burnt sienna, sometimes appearing on a rich black background, reflects the festive tone of the text without tipping over into what could be—in the hands of a less skilled poet and artist—overwhelming or obnoxious in its fervor. Instead, readers will appreciate and immediately recognize the joyful expectancy. VERDICT: Buoyant and perfectly childlike, meant to be read aloud with gusto and a keen sense of urgency. A first purchase for any library, and a ready-made gift for home collections.



From *When's My Birthday*, written by Julie Fogliano and illustrated by Christian Robinson

Appendix: Notes about Review Sources

Founded in 1905, *Booklist* magazine is the review journal of the American Library Association. It comprises two print magazines, an extensive website and database, e-newsletters, webinars, and other resources that support librarians in collection development and readers' advisory. *Booklist* sponsors the Printz Award, for the most distinguished books for young adults published each year in the U.S., and its editors serve as consultants to many ALA youth book award committees each year.

Bertha Mahony founded *The Horn Book* in 1924 to herald the best in children's literature. Today, *The Horn Book Magazine* and *The Horn Book Guide* are among the most distinguished journals in the field of children's and young adult literature.

Founded in 1933, *Kirkus* has been an authoritative voice in book discovery for 80 years. *Kirkus Reviews* magazine gives industry professionals a sneak peek at the most notable books being published weeks before they're released. *Kirkus* serves the book reviews to consumers in a weekly email newsletter and on Kirkus.com, giving readers unbiased, critical recommendations they can trust.

Publishers Weekly is familiarly known in the book world as "PW." PW is a weekly news magazine focused on the international book publishing business. It is targeted at publishers, booksellers, librarians, literary agents, authors, and the media. It offers feature articles and news on all aspects of the book business, bestsellers lists in a number of categories, and industry statistics, but its best known service is pre-publication book reviews, publishing some 9,000 per year.

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