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LIS 527

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Annotated Bibliography: Children's Literature

Almond, David. *Skellig*. New York: Putnam & Grosset. 1996.

Modern Fantasy, Ages 9-12. Michael and his family move into a dilapidated house that his parents have visions of remodeling into the perfect family home. His mother goes into labor early and has his baby sister before her due date. She is very sick and spends a lot of time in the hospital. Michael is left with his father. In the meantime, Michael explores the broken down garage where he finds a man living there. A cross between a bird and man, he begins to form a friendship with the man. Seeking out additional help with the man, he shares his secret with a new neighborhood friend Mina. They work together to move the man to a safer location where he shares his extraordinary secret with them. This coming of age story is about conquering your fears, building relationships, and seeing the world in a different light.

Brown, Don. *A Wizard from the Start*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Books. 2010.

Biography, Ages 6-9. This is a candid look at the life of Thomas Edison through a child's mind eye. Watercolor illustrations add to the storyline as we see a young Edison bloom as a scientist questioning the world around him. Always an entrepreneur, Edison would scavenge old parts that were cast off and turn them into usable machinery that he could

profit from. Hearing loss in his teen years pushed him towards learning to be a telegrapher but he wasn't satisfied with just that and still tinkered with different machinery creating improved telegraphs, motion picture cameras, phonograph, electric batteries and more. His hard work paid off in 1839, when he created the lightbulb and became a household name.

Burkert, Rand. *Mouse & Lion*. New York, NY: Michael di Capua Books. 2011.

Traditional Literature, Ages 4-8. In this adaptation of Aesop's fable, the author retells the story with beautiful illustrations by famed Caldecott Award winner Nancy Ekholm Burkert(his mother!). Set in Africa, a tiny mouse accidentally startles a lion awake. In return the lion shows his teeth and plans to eat him. In order to save himself, the mouse pledges his loyalty to the lion. As the story progresses, the mouse is given the opportunity to show he is thankful to the lion by helping him out of a pinch and gnawing him out of the hunters net that he has become snared in.

Campbell, Nicola. *Shin-chi's Canoe*. Canada: Groundwood Books. 2008.

Multicultural, Ages 5-8. This story chronicles six year old Shin-chi as he attends his first year of Indian residential school. His sister is also going with him but they are not allowed to interact at school. This time is hard for Shin-chi as he misses his family and culture greatly but it is the Canadian law that he learn English and religion. He soon makes a friend and the two get into mischief to pass the time. The Indian children are treated poorly and rarely have enough to eat. When the salmon return, the children are

loaded up like cattle and returned to their families where much to Shin-chi's delight, his father is making him a dugout canoe of his very own.

Carle, Eric. *The Very Busy Spider*. New York, NY: Philomel Books, 1984.

Picture books, Ages 1-5. A spider is busy spinning her web. Throughout the day, different animals visit her and ask her to come and play with them but she is too intent on her work and does not answer them. As she spins her web, children can have a tactile experience and touch the web and feel the lines of the web as it grows. The illustrations are in watercolor and very bright and inviting. In the end, the spider catches a fly in her completed web and an owl asks "Whoo made this beautiful web?" but the spider is fast asleep after her meal and cannot answer.

Cowley, Joy. *Chameleon, Chameleon*. New York, NY: Scholastic Press. 2005.

Informational, Ages 3-6. Vivid photographs are used to show the wide variety of chameleon colors. Each page features a vibrant photograph with easy to read writing. The story features chameleon who can't find food in its own tree so he sets out on a quest to find a new tree with more to eat. Along the way he encounters many different types of geckos camouflaged in the trees. He also runs into a tiny frog and a dangerous scorpion. When he finally gets to another tree, he finds food...and another gecko protecting the tree as her own. After a quick display of colors, each realizes that the other means no harm and now they are friends.

Garden, Nancy. *Molly's Family*. Canada: Douglas & McIntyre, Ltd. 2004.

Realistic Fiction, Ages 5-8. Molly is a kindergarten student. Her class is getting ready for parent's night. The teacher asks the students to create a drawing of their family. When one of the other students sees Molly's family that has two mothers and no father, a class discussion breaks out. The children discuss each of their different families and the fact that they don't always have a mom and a dad. At home Molly tells her moms about what happened and they explain why she has two mothers. The next day, Molly is still confused and decided to not take her family drawing with her. As she is looking at her classmate's families, she realizes that there are all kinds of families and it is okay. She then decides to bring her drawing back to school to be hung up with the others for parent's night the following day.

Hesse, Karen. *The Cats in Krasinski Square*. New York, NY: Scholastic. 2004.

Historical Fiction, Ages 9-12. The cats in the square once belonged to someone but now after the war, they have no one. A young Polish girl who also escaped the war, makes it her mission to play with the cats each day, both receiving much needed affection during these hard times. She lives with her only living relative, her sister Mina, who tells her about some smugglers that are bringing much needed food. One by one, they gather the cats in baskets and plan to use them to distract the dogs away from the food smugglers at the train station. All at once, they release the cats and the dogs go crazy! The smuggled food and the cats disappear from the station as quickly as they arrived. The food and the cats are both safe because of one young girl's creative plan.

Jenkins, Emily. *What Happens on Wednesdays*. Canada: Douglas & McIntyre, Ltd. 2007.

Realistic Fiction, Ages 3-6. This is a story told in the eyes of a preschool age girl as she experiences a “typical” Wednesday. She chronicles the time of the day passing through the various events she takes part in from dawn until night. Set in her Brooklyn neighborhood, she takes you through her neighborhood via special dogs in the park, places to eat, where her friends live and on to preschool. After school mom picks her up and they visit the library, go swimming and wait for daddy to come home where the evening routine kicks in with dinner time, bath, books and bed.

Pericoli, Matteo. *The True Story of Stellina*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf. 2006.

Informational Books, Ages 4-9. One day when she is coming home from work in downtown Manhattan, Holly finds a tiny baby bird. She looks for its mother but it is nowhere to be found so she decided to take it home with her. Holly names her Stellina and she takes the bird everywhere with her. She is now the baby bird’s mother and feeds her squished up fruit and cares for her. Days go by and Stellina gets stronger and gets her own cage. She can fly around the apartment and tries to build nests in Holly’s hair. Stellina lived with Holly for eight years until she died.

McDermott, Gerald. *Monkey: A Trickster Tale from India*. New York, NY: Harcourt Children’s Books. 2011.

Traditional Literature, Ages 6-9. Crocodile wants nothing more to eat Monkey’s heart so he patiently watches him jumping through the trees. Crocodile calls to Monkey and tells him he will give him a ride to the island in the middle of the river that has delicious

mangoes. Monkey loves mangoes so he gladly hops on his back but quickly realizes Crocodile is trying to trick him. Monkey being a little trickier says he has left his heart in a tree on the bank of the river, if he takes him back he will give it to him. So Crocodile takes Monkey back to the riverbank. Monkey escaped up a tree and wants the mangoes now more than ever! He finds a path across some rocks to get to the island. He tricks Crocodile one more time to get his delicious mangoes but is successful!

Millen, C.M. *The Ink Garden of Brother Theophane*. Watertown, MA. Charlesbridge. 2010.

Historical Fiction, Ages 6-9. Brother Theophane longed for something more than the brown words that filled his brown days that were often monotonous. He was curious about nature and the beauty outdoors. As his mind wandered, he was given a new task to make the brown ink for the wells. The new job afforded him the luxury of going outdoors to explore where he finds all of the delights nature has to offer. He gathers all sorts of plants and begins to experiment with creating new colored inks from them. He shared his inks with his fellow monks and they began to use them to create illuminated manuscripts.

Mora, Pat. *Yum! Mmmm! Que Rico!*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books, Inc. 2007.

Poetry, Ages 7-12. Blueberries, vanilla, chiles and more are presented in this poetry book of indigenous foods of the Americas. Each set of pages features beautiful illustrations, an explanation of the food and how it has been used over time to create everyday items, medicines, and other interesting items, and a haiku poem. The background of the pages is a beautiful illustration in brilliant colors. The vivid depiction adds additional meaning for readers looking to further interpret the haiku. The illustrations give you a strong sense of

cultural and familial ties to the foods within the Mexican, Central American and Native American cultures. Some of the foods are presented to readers in simple bilingual terms.

Patel, Sanjay. *Ganesh's Sweet Tooth*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books. 2012.

Multicultural, Ages 5-8. This is a children's tale loosely based on one of the most popular legends in Hindu mythology about the elephant god, Ganesh. When Ganesh breaks his tusk eating candy, he is very unhappy and tosses his broken tusk and it ends up accidentally hitting a man nearby. This man turns out to be the great poet Vyasa. He asks him to use his broken tusk to transcribe the Mahabharata, an epic poem of how things began in the Hindu culture. Ganesh agrees and Vyasa recites the poem without stopping and Ganesh writes the entire poem down. After writing for days, Ganesh is happy to see that his friend Mr. Mouse has saved him some candy to enjoy after his task is done.

Prelutsky, Jack. *My Parents Think I'm Sleeping*. New York, NY: Greenwillow Books. 1985.

Poetry, Ages 4-8. What really happens when children are sent to bed? Fourteen poems encapsulate a young boy's adventures as he tries to go to sleep. Told from his perspective, he reflects on his musings from the day, listens to the rain, and creates shadow monsters with items in his room to fill the time before he finally succumbs to sleep. He even sneaks down to the kitchen to have a piece of chocolate cake. The poems are simply written in a rhyming verse that would be highly entertaining to anyone that has had trouble falling asleep. The illustrations are very complementary to the text and add just enough detail and boyish charm to the storyline.

Rathman, Peggy. *Goodnight Gorilla*. New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1994.

Picture books, Ages 0-4. It is bedtime at the zoo. A sneaky gorilla follows the zookeeper around as he puts all of the animals to bed at night. The gorilla unlocks each cage as the zookeeper bids the animals "goodnight". The train of escaped animals follows the unaware zookeeper back to his house where they all climb in bed with him. Upon saying goodnight to his sleeping wife, all of the animals respond to him waking the wife who then returns all of the animals to their cages.

Rohmann, Eric. *Bone Dog*. New York, NY: Roaring Book Press. 2011.

Modern Fantasy, Ages 6-9. Gus is saddened by the death of his dog Ella. Months pass and he is depressed. Finally around Halloween, he is feeling up to going trick-or-treating and dresses as a skeleton. As he is passing a cemetery he is cornered by a gang of real skeletons that invite him to have fun. When he reveals that he is just a boy, the gange of skeletons turns on him. Flying in from the sky is the skeleton of his dog Ella to save the day. Gus and Ella start barking wildly and real dogs come running and scare the skeletons away. The two friends get to spend one last night under the full moon before parting ways.

Rumford, James. *Sequoyah*. New York, NY: Houghyon Mifflin. 2004.

Biography, Ages 6-10. Tennessee born, Sequoyah, is a Cherokee Indian. Throughout his life he works hard as a metalworker. He was loved by his people and didn't want their Cherokee voices to fade away. To preserve his tribe's heritage, he decided to capture their voices in writing. Up until this point, their language was only spoken, not written. He created hundreds of symbols for words and scratched them into wood slats. His

people thought he was crazy and turned on him burning down his home and his work inside. He changed his path and created an alphabet and began to teach people to read the new letters. The new alphabet caught on quickly and was embraced by the Cherokee tribe and still used today.