



UKLA Book Awards 2015

Longlists

3-6

Ahlberg, Allan, & Braun, Sebastien (illustrator): *Kicking a Ball* Puffin

In exuberant, unfaltering verse, Allan Ahlberg explores the pleasures of kickabouts with family and friends. The language is rich and exciting, and the warmth of the subtle illustrations enhance the text. This is a wonderful book to share and then encourage children to explore further.

Alborozo: *The Acrobat* Child's Play

Tired of being ignored an acrobat leaves the circus and finally finds his audience when he starts to feed birds in the park. This book offers a simple story which enables the reader's imagination to shoot off in hundreds of new directions. The pictures, like the text, are accessible to foundation stage children but also offer scope to older readers.

Bee, Sarah, & Kitamura, Satoshi: *The Yes* Andersen Press

However much it is attacked by reasons to give up, the Yes (a huge, endearing, orange creature) keeps on. This is much more than a 'good message for children' book because the tone is thoughtful, the created world intriguing, and the language is vivid. Words and pictures come together to make something very special.

Bingham, Kelly & Zelinsky, Paul: *Z is for Moose* Andersen Press

From the front cover, you can tell this is a book to love. Moose is determined to get into an alphabet book and rampages through the pages. The resolution is a delight. The humour from both words and pictures works well for adults and children so this is a book to be enjoyed many times. Yes you could get all sorts of excellent work from it but that isn't really the point.

Browne, Anthony: *What if . . . ?* Doubleday

There is nobody quite like Anthony Browne at exploring the hidden anxieties of childhood. In *What if . . . ?* a child's fears are shown in the houses he passes on his way to a party. All is well; child and mother are more confident at the end. Both words and pictures have a sensitive depth which respect the reality of a child's worries while suggesting that new experiences are often rather better than we'd feared.

Cobb, Rebecca: *Aunt Amelia* Macmillan

An aunt who happens to be an alligator ignores all the careful instructions she is given when she looks after two children. There must be time in KS1 for books, like this one, which are just really good fun. The words and the pictures tell very different stories so that the reader has to draw together information from both to appreciate the story.

Corderoy, Tracey & Warnes, Tim *NO!* Little Tiger Press

Archie the rhino learns to say 'No' and enjoys the power it gives him. However he soon comes to realise that he's missing out on things. The simplicity of the words and structure here allow the child to get ahead of the narration and predict what is going to happen, enabling a very active early reading experience. This is a delightful book for building reading confidence and for talking about ourselves and others. We've all known an Archie- and probably been one.

Davis, Nicola & Carlin, Laura: *The Promise* Walker Books

Some books merit a long, slow, thoughtful reading: *The Promise* is one of them. When a young thief steals a bag of acorns her life, and the life of the city around her, is changed forever. Powerful images on the page complement the powerful imagery of the text creating a story which we enjoy and, like the acorns, want to plant in the mind of another reader.

Daywalt, Drew & Jeffers, Oliver: *The Day the Crayons Quit* HarperCollins

Fed up with the way they are misused, Duncan's crayons each write him a letter of complaint. This is a very funny book which encourages children to be adventurous and creative. Behind the humour there is the recognition of the importance of others' perspectives on our actions. *The Day the Crayons Quit* is a deceptively subtle book which teachers and children can enjoy in many ways.

Eliot, T.S. & Robins, Arthur: *Macavity the Mystery Cat* Faber & Faber

In the makeover of the decade, Arthur Robins has created wonderful, witty illustrations which make Eliot's verse zingingly accessible to a young audience. This excellent interpretation makes you appreciate again the cleverness and fun of the original poem. Do not let its relevance to the curriculum put you off this book, it is a pleasure from whiskers to tail tip.

Gliori, Debbie: *Dragon loves Penguin* Bloomsbury

A baby penguin wants a bedtime story about dragons but, as the story unfolds, readers begin to realise that a family story is being passed on. Exploring ideas about being different and the things which really matter in life, Debbie Gliori has created a book which affirms what is really important to us all in this beautifully written and illustrated book.

Gravett, Emily: *Little Mouse's Big Book of Beasts* Macmillan

Though we usually think of books with flaps and holes as being designed for the very youngest readers, in *Little Mouse's Big Book of Beasts* Emily Gravett has reworked the form to create a sophisticated, challenging book where every additional feature draws you deeper into the story. It is very clever in the way it invites the reader to approach fears through humour.

Grey, Mini: *Hermelin* Jonathan Cape

Aided by his powers of observation and excellent typing skills, Hermelin the mouse solves a number of mysteries but encounters humans' prejudice against mice. Fortunately all is well in the end in this lovely book which encourages readers to study both words and pictures for clues. The turns in the story are sudden and unexpected making this a great book for those readers ready to move on from very predictable text.

Haughton, Chris: *Shh! We Have a Plan* Walker Books

Inept hunters are determined to catch a bird but the birds have other ideas. It is a very rare book which creates real humour through the repetition of very few words. *Shh! We Have a Plan* does this superbly. The pictures convey changing emotions deftly while the text repeats simple phrases in different contexts. Very young children will enjoy this because it is a real story with an unexpected ending.

Hofmeyer, Dianne & Ray, Jane: *Zeraffa Giraffa* Frances Lincoln

It is lovely to see true events depicted in ways which make them accessible and intriguing to young children. Hofmeyer's book is based on an account of a giraffe which was sent from (now) South Sudan to Paris in 1824. Lyrical

text and intricate pictures blend perfectly in this very handsome book which evokes the spirit of the journey between two cultures.

Hopgood, Tim: *Little Answer* Corgi

Many books for young children attempt to simplify questions such as 'what makes the world go round?' but not this one! Little Answer knows he is the answer to a question but he has lost it. After taking readers on a journey through some ideas which are too big at the moment, the correct answer is found. *Little Answer* is excellent because it acknowledges that small children have big questions bubbling through their minds.

Jones, Pip & Okstad, Ella (illustrator): *Squishy McFluff the Invisible Cat* Faber & Faber

The first thing you notice about *Squishy McFluff the Invisible Cat* is that it is a very small book which would fit comfortably in the hands of a six year old. It has a longish text divided into chapters which makes it a perfect transition book for the very newly emergent independent reader. However it is not its form but its quality which makes it a great book. It is funny, exciting and wise.

Merino, Gemma: *The Crocodile who didn't Like Water* Macmillan

When the baby crocodiles hatch, one of them is different. In a lovely reworking of Ugly Duckling themes, Merino has created a witty book where pictures and words explore the loneliness of the outsider in ways which lead you to know it is all going to be fine in the end. *The Crocodile who didn't Like Water* as well as being a delightful book in its own right, is a fabulous introduction to the idea of the interconnectedness of story themes.

Rayner, Catherine: *Abigail* Little Tiger Press

Every foundation stage classroom needs luscious counting books and books which encourage children to realise there is a whole world outside their immediate experience. Catherine Rayner has combined both in a remarkable book about a giraffe who loves to count but is thwarted by the constant movement of things on the African plain where she lives. Stunning illustrations wrap around simple vivid text in this very rewarding book.

Sarah, Linda: *Mi and Museum City* Phoenix Yard Books

Mi is bored and lonely until strange happy music takes him to a new friend. Together they create surreal museums where visitors are requested to queue 'in a disorderly and noisy fashion.' Soon a whole city of bizarre museums springs up. This book has an important message about the power of words to bring the unknown and impossible into our minds. As children pore over this intricate book, they will certainly begin to create their own wild, exciting ideas.

Sparkes, Amy and Ogilvie, Sarah: *Do Not Enter the Monster Zoo* Red Fox

When a small boy wins the prize of running the zoo for a day, he has no idea it is a monster zoo. However he tames all the strange creatures and has a wonderful time. Written in enthusiastic verse and with wild and humorous pictures, this book is at one level a huge pleasure for a wide readership. Beyond the fun Amy Sparkes explores important ideas about confronting the things we find scary.



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Longlists

7-11

Bartram, Simon: *Up for the Cup* Templar Publishing

Though the central character of *Up for the Cup* is described as a 'complete and utter footie nutter' this is not just a book for football fans. It embraces and then pokes affectionate fun at the subject in a way which will entertain a very broad range of children. The illustrations are as vivid and varied as the text.

Booth, Anne: *Girl with a White Dog* Catnip Publishing

This book starts as if it is going to be simply an engaging family story: Gran suddenly acquires a puppy. However as the story develops, deep and frightening glimpses of the past emerge. Told in a completely believable first person narrative, the book explores difficult themes appropriate to older readers in Key Stage Two. It has something important to say and does so in compelling, vivid ways.

Boyne, John: *Stay Where You Are and Then Leave* Doubleday

As World War One is nearing its end, Alfie believes that his soldier father hasn't written for years because he is away on a secret mission. When he learns the truth, Alfie is determined to find his dad and bring him home. Though the themes of this book are difficult, the narrative voice is so innocent that readers are taken gently through to the dramatic conclusion. *Stay Where You Are and Then Leave* gives very relevant insights into the hidden victims of war.

Butler, Heather: *Us minus Mum* Little, Brown

There are a number of excellent books which focus on bereaved children but very few which take the reader from diagnosis through to mourning for a parent. *Us minus Mum* does this with sensitive tact. What makes this book work so well is that the central character, George, is a completely believable, very normal boy. His many plans and ideas mean that sorrow and happiness are balanced in a sensitive way as the story develops.

Caldecott, Elen: *The Great Ice Cream Heist* Bloomsbury

Eva is a very over-protected child whose grandmother insists would benefit from spending her holiday helping at a community scheme. As the story of *The Great Ice Cream Heist* develops, readers see the changes in Eva and grow to understand her father's attitude. Though it deals with very important themes, Elen Caldecott includes many wonderfully funny scenes so that the reader can choose how deeply to consider the issues.

Dowd, Siobhan, Smy, Pam (illustrator): *The Ransom of Dond* David Fickling Books

Using the themes and conventions of folk story, *The Ransom of Dond* explores important themes of family, duty and love in ways which offer KS2 readers a new perspective. This is not the sweet fairytale world of children's movies but a return to the older truer purposes of story as a way of helping us to understand ourselves and our world. The spectacular illustrations weave between the beautiful writing to make this a memorable book.

Dragt, Tonke, translated by Laura Watkinson: *The Letter for the King* Pushkin Press

On the night before he is due to become a knight, Tiuri is given a dangerous task- to deliver a letter to the King. Working with structures of a quest story, Dragt shows us the development of the hero as he has to make many difficult decisions. This theme is developed against a background of wonderfully inventive settings. *The Letter for the King* asks the reader to associate fully with an admirable character. It is a rewarding, exciting journey.

Fine, Anne & Kate Aldous (illustrator): *On Planet Fruitcake* Egmont

Miss Dove, who is regarded as the nicest teacher ever, tells her class she wants them to think but comes to regret it when they do so with spectacular success. Ideas spin wildly in this story which takes simple ideas and then shows wild possibilities. As with all the great books, there is so much beyond the page here, not least the invitation to reach new responses to the problems set in the story. A wonderful book for talking and laughing.

Foreman, Michael: *The Amazing Tale of Ali Pasha* Templar Publishing

Based on the true events of a tortoise rescued from the beach of Gallipoli, Foreman has created a beautiful book. It is a real pleasure to read quickly it for the remarkable story and then slowly to savour the illustrations and the multi-stranded text. More than everything else *The Amazing Tale of Ali Pasha* shows us that the essential goodness of people continues even in the most terrible places.

Funke, Cornelia & Armino, Monica (illustrator): *The Moonshine Dragon* Barrington Stoke

Unlike so many books written for newly independent readers, *The Moonshine Dragon* has a really gripping story. It is an adventure in which to lose yourself created in a way which will ensure you don't get lost. The language is supportive but throws in a number of unusual words and phrases to ignite the imagination; this is certainly a book to make children recognise that books are sheer fun.

Gaiman, Neil & Riddell, Chris: *Fortunately the Milk* Bloomsbury

Dad takes a very long time to come back from buying the milk but explains why. His increasingly implausible explanations are a delight particularly as Chris Riddell's illustrations interweave with the words to bring them to life. This is a book for sharing in school or home. You can be sure that, as soon as you put it down, a child will pick it up to read further or revisit what you have read together.

Gavin, Jamila & Collingridge, Richard (illustrator): *Blackberry Blue* Tamarind Books

This is a remarkable collection of short stories based on the conventions of the folk story. Gavin uses them as foundations for consideration of contemporary, multi-cultural issues, making them accessible for children because they are set in fantasy. There is power and passion in these stories, making *Blackberry Blue* a very valuable book in KS2 classes.

Gemin, Giancarlo: *Cowgirl* Nosy Crow

When a herd of cows is threatened, the children from an estate manage to hide them with families. In this unique book, Giancarlo Gemin has created a modern allegory in which people and places can be changed for the better by the growing effects of a decision. *Cowgirl* not only has several important things to say, it says them in ways which are vivid, compelling and moving.

Lewis, Gill: *Scarlet Ibis* Oxford University Press

Scarlet has always cared both for her younger brother Red and her mother but, when the situation becomes impossible, the children are separated. *Scarlet Ibis* shows how the power of Scarlet's love for her brother brings them together again. Written with sensitivity and tact, this book explores both differences in people as well as the things which make us similar. It is with great skill that Gill Lewis draws her story together to reach a plausible, optimistic end.

McCaughrean, Geraldine: *The Middle of Nowhere* Usborne

Comity lives in a Telegraph House in the middle of nowhere in nineteenth century Australia. This setting is brought magnificently to life through Geraldine McCaughrean's detailed research and vivid prose. The powerful narrative of bullying, exploitation and racism reflects the rigours of the setting. It is balanced with the kindness and nobility which Comity encounters in the seemingly least likely people. This is a book for children on the brink of adolescence who are ready to explore the world through the power of literature.

Millard, Glenda, King, Stephen Michael (illustrator): *Perry Angel's Suitcase* Phoenix Yard Books

Glenda Millard's 'Kingdom of Silk' series certainly goes from strength to strength. Perry Angel comes as a foster child to the unconventional Silk family in rural Australia. Very gradually, the family's love and welcome enable Perry to feel that he is wanted. *Perry Angel's Suitcase* manages to explore complex ideas about inner lives without melodrama or sentimentality. Though this book can be read as a stand-alone, children will want to discover the whole series.

Moorhouse, Tom, Mendez, Simon (illustrator):: *The River Singers* Oxford University Press

Sylvan, a very young water vole, and his brothers and sisters have to leave the safety of the burrow where they were born when the river is threatened. *The River Singers* shows Tom Moorhouse's great depth of knowledge of British wildlife: every detail makes you want to sit very still on a river bank and watch and listen. All this detail supports the story of a really exciting journey. This is a book to make you view the world in a new way.

Reeve, Philip & McIntyre, Sarah (illustrator): *Oliver and the Seawigs* Oxford University Press

When Oliver's parents go missing, he with an eccentric group of new friends including a rambling isle called Cliff, go looking for them. *Oliver and the Seawigs* is a book which children who have developed a little stamina as readers are going to love because it plays with language and ideas in startling, exciting ways. Philip Reeve's brilliant text is supported by Sarah McIntyre's witty illustrations.

Rosen, Michael & Ross, Tony (illustrator): *Choosing Crumble* Andersen Press

Terri-Lee and her family go to choose a dog expecting to be asked questions but not by the dog itself. Michael Rosen has written a wonderful book for young children which blends the real world and a rich fantasy together in ways which both support and excite. Characters are brought to life through very funny dialogue and by Tony Ross's illustrations on every page.

Said, S.F., McKean, David (illustrator): *Phoenix* David Fickling Books

Set in a future where the war between Humans and Aliens controls every aspect of life, Lucky believes he is a very ordinary boy until his dreams about flying among the singing stars become very real. Wrapped in a fast-paced space adventure, Said considers themes of racism and identity in this very moving book. Dave McKean's extraordinary pictures do much more than illustrate the text: they add a real sense of the majesty of space.

Smith, Alex T.: *Claude on the Slopes* Hodder

This new 'Claude' book will be very welcome to both old fans and new readers. Claude who is nominally a dog decides to go skiing. His ensuing adventures riot all over the pages of this delightful book. Smith recognises that young children find adults enormously funny and ensures that Claude meets some very eccentric characters. The text is spare and supportive in this witty, heavily illustrated book.

Sutcliffe, William, Tazzyman, David (illustrator): *Circus of Thieves and the Raffle of Doom* Simon and Schuster

When Hannah meets Billy and his bad tempered camel she is drawn into the sinister world of Shanks Impossible Circus. William Sutcliffe has written a story which is like a wonderful maze: as soon as you think you are on the right track, the narrative has another twist. This is a superb book for children who are ready to be delighted by the tricks which a very skilled author can play on his readers.

Tan, Shaun: *Rules of Summer* Hodder

It is wonderful to find a picture book which has the depth and range of ideas to be intriguing even for the most advanced readers in Key Stage Two. *Rules of Summer* reminds us that reading must always involve what we bring to

the book. Shaun Tan offers a bare text and illustrations which enable us to speculate, deduce and shape our thoughts. The ending is reassuring but you make the route to it is as scary as you dare.

Torday, Piers: *The Dark Wild* Quercus

In this futuristic fantasy, humans have attempted to destroy all the animals as they believe they carry a deadly virus. Kester believes he has rescued the last wild things but animals are in hiding and want their revenge. *The Dark Wild* could be read as a really gripping adventure story but it also invites readers to consider the world as it is. This is a strange and wonderful book which has something important to say.



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Longlists

12-16+

Berry, Julie: *All the Truth that's In Me* Templar

Judith has been missing in the forests around an American pioneer settlement when she returns home unable to speak because her tongue has been cut out. *All the Truth that's In Me* is at heart a love story created in a brilliant evoked setting of bigotry, mistrust and stifling expectations. The issues are very relevant for any young reader who will be drawn through the narrative by the power of the authorial voice.

Brooks, Kevin: *The Ultimate Truth* Macmillan

Believing that the crash which killed his parents wasn't an accident, Travis starts to investigate. As he finds out more about their work, he is drawn into a very sinister world. Kevin has written a fast-paced completely gripping thriller which oozes panache from every page. The depth of the characterisation and quality of writing raise *The Ultimate Truth* far above most books of this genre.

Chan, Crystal: *Bird* Tamarind Books

Jewel was born the day her brother died. When a new boy arrives in the neighbourhood, Jewel finds her life changing as she learns more about her brother's life and death. Crystal Chan's writing is wonderful: she creates settings, events and quandaries through the piercingly true voice of her central character. The book gives profound insights into a world which may be new to many readers.

Cooper, Susan: *Ghost Hawk* Bodley Head

Little Hawk, an eleven year old Pokanoket boy is sent into the forest to survive for three months to become a man. When he witnesses a murder, his life becomes intertwined with that of John, a settler boy. The conflicts at the founding of modern America are shown vividly in this complex, rich and rewarding book. Susan Cooper's skill and bravery as a writer have never been seen more clearly than they are in *Ghost Hawk*.

Cotterill, Jo: *Looking at the Stars* Bodley Head

Amina's family is forced to flee as refugees from an obsessive regime. Even in a harsh refugee camp, Amina and her sister Jenna's situation is enhanced by the power of the imagination and storytelling. Though *Looking at the Stars* certainly doesn't avoid any depictions of the harshness of life for people in conflict zones, this beautifully written book leaves with a feeling of hope.

De Fombelle, Timothée, translated by Ardizzone, Sarah: *Vango* Walker Books

Vango is about to be ordained as a priest when he becomes entangled with a murder. This exciting starting place takes the reader through 1930s Europe as the hero is chased by police and a hitman. The characters and settings of this very filmic novel for older readers are vivid and the narrative twists and turns with an extraordinary energy.

Desborough, Natasha: *Weirdos vs Quimboids* Catnip Publishing

Blossom Uxley-Williams's initials and embarrassing parents ensure she is regarded as one of the school weirdos. However, she is determined to change this through the successes of her band. It is a real treat to read a book written for teenagers which is not only very funny indeed but also explores themes which will be very real for all young adult readers.

Earl, Phil: *The Bubble Wrap Boy* Puffin

Charlie is the smallest boy in his year at school, spends every evening doing deliveries for his parents' takeaway and only has one friend. When he discovers he is really good at skateboarding he has to hide it from his very over-protective mother. However, his family is hiding a much bigger secret from him. *The Bubble Wrap Boy* is a wise, funny book which explores family life with subtle sensitivity.

Farrant, Natasha: *After Iris: The Diaries of Bluebell Gadsby* Faber & Faber

Three years after the death of her twin, Blue tries to cope with life by seeing it through her camera. This exhilarating book switches between transcripts of video and prose diaries as a story of an unconventional family is developed. There are wonderfully funny passages as Natasha Farrant explores the ways in which mourning heightens all emotions in the life of a very believable teenager.

Fine, Anne: *Blood Family* Doubleday

Anne Fine explores intriguing ideas about identity in this complex and moving novel for young adults. Edward, an adopted child who had a horrific early childhood, discovers the identity of father and has to resolve what this means to him. Told from multiple viewpoints, this intricate book builds up a picture of complex characters all trying to make the right decisions. *Blood Family* is very moving indeed.

Furniss, Clare: *The Year of the Rat* Simon and Schuster

Sixteen year old Pearl's mother dies giving birth. Pearl, who sees her prematurely born baby sister as 'The Rat', struggles with all the changes in her family. Though Clare Furniss's themes are bleak, her affectionate understanding of teenagers and chinks of humour make this an enjoyable, thought-provoking book for young adult readers.

Herndorf, Wolfgang, translated by Mohr, Tim: *Why We Took the Car* Andersen Press

Mike has drawn a beautiful picture for Tatiana but isn't invited to her party. However he and his friend Tschick decide to borrow a car and go anyway. This is the beginning of a road trip where they meet many unusual characters in intriguing sometimes surreal episodes. Each encounter subtly changes each of the boys so, by the end of this remarkable book we are confident that they are more able to cope with the world.

Landman, Tanya: *Buffalo Soldier* Walker Books

Charlotte a young slave in the Deep South of America witnesses many terrible things which, when emancipation comes, convince her that she will be safest if she disguises herself as a man and becomes a soldier. Written in a unique and completely believable first person voice, *Buffalo Soldier* gives readers a depth of understanding of issues which are still very significant.

Levithan, David: *Every Day* Egmont

Every day, A wakes up in a new body. Though he always tries to live an unobtrusively, one day he falls in love. Every day he tries to return to Rhiannon but then one of his hosts knows his life was taken over and the story becomes sinister as A is threatened. This is a very strange love story which intrigues as it explores themes of our perceptions of others and our understanding of ourselves.

McGowan, Anthony: *Brock* Barrington Stoke

Nicky's younger brother Kenny is bullied because of his learning difficulties. When a badger sett is threatened by the same bullies, Nicky helps him to rescue one cub. This is a very moving story of boys caring for each other in family circumstances which should defeat anyone. It is a very exciting, warm-hearted story which is very accessible even to those who find reading difficult.

Ness, Patrick: *More Than This* Walker Books

More Than This starts with the description of a boy drowning then it gets complicated as Seth regains consciousness in two worlds. He drifts between his own past life and post-apocalyptic suburbs where he meets other teenagers who may also be survivors. This is a challenging, very rewarding book in which important themes are approached with great warmth and depth of understanding.

Nicholls, Sally: *Close Your Pretty Eyes* Scholastic

Olivia, who is growing up in the care system, moves to her sixteenth home, a sixteenth century farmhouse haunted by Amelia Dyer, a Victorian baby farmer. Though her new foster family are determined that Olivia will be a permanent member of the family, Dyer's influence on Olivia becomes very sinister. This is a powerful novel for young readers which has both sensitivity towards the characters and a powerful theme.

Priestley, Chris: *The Dead Men Stood Together* Bloomsbury

A young boy, mesmerised by his uncle's stories of the sea decides to go with him on the next voyage. Life at sea is no idyll and when his uncle shoots the albatross, the horrors begin. *The Dead Men Stood Together* is a spectacular tribute to the Rime of the Ancient Marine which will satisfy readers' desire for gothic adventure and will lead many to the original poem.

Rosoff, Meg: *Picture me Gone* Puffin

Mila and her father are about to visit an old friend in New York when they learn he is missing. They search for him through beautifully described landscapes, both changing subtly as their journey progresses. Apart from the assured, spare writing, the great quality of this book is the way it lures you to think well beyond what is given. It is as generous to readers as the characters are to their situation.

Sedgwick, Marcus: *She is not Invisible* Orion

Laureth's father Jack has been struggling for years to finish a novel about coincidence. When he is supposed to be in Switzerland doing research, his notebook is discovered in New York. Laureth decides to take her seven-year-old brother Benjamin to America and search for him. In this engaging mystery thriller the reader may begin to realise that none of the description uses visual images. Laureth is blind. She may not be able to see, but she refuses to be invisible. Through Laureth the reader begins to see the world a little differently.

Sloan, Holly Goldberg: *Counting by 7s* Piccadilly Press

Holly Goldberg Sloan skilfully builds a picture of Willow, a very complex child. She is academically very advanced, obsessive about botany and medicine and very much out of place among her school friends. Her adoptive parents are killed in a car crash. *Counting by Sevens* then shows with real compassion how a child who clings to routines manages to adapt and in doing so make the world much better for those she meets.

Smith, Ali, Paoletti, Laura (illustrator): *The Story of Antigone* Pushkin Press

The story of *Antigone* is troubling for any reader. In this excellent rewriting, Ali Smith has had the courage not to play down the violence but has given it a meaningful shape by introducing a crow to whom the bloodshed seems admirable. This wry voice gives a cohesion and new perspective to the ancient story. This is an intelligently written, handsome book which will be welcomed by many teachers.

Wein, Elizabeth: *Rose Under Fire* Egmont

Rose is a young pilot in WW2, one of a small number of female pilots. She works for the civil air force, but longs to get a flight to France. She does, the plan goes wrong and Rose ends up in a women's work camp. There is a real feeling of authenticity in *Rose Under Fire* due to the underpinning of the narrative by research which brings the appalling setting to vivid life. However, the most impressive aspect of this very moving novel is the support the prisoners give each other. Any young adult would gain a great deal from reading this excellent book.

Book Blurbs by Jackie Brien, UKLA Book Awards team