

2020 National Book Award: Young People's Literature

Established in 1950, the National Book Award is an American literary prize administered by the National Book Foundation. Its mission is to celebrate the best of American literature, to expand its audience, and to enhance the cultural value of great writing in America. The following ten titles have been selected as the best of 2020 in the category of Young People's Literature. Some titles may be available in e-formats. Check the catalog or ask a librarian for assistance.

2020 National Book Award Winner:



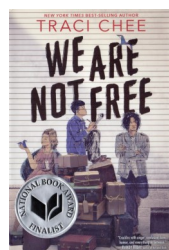
Callender, Kacen
King and the Dragonflies

YA Callender
Gr. 4 and up

Twelve-year-old Kingston James is sure his brother Khalid has turned into a dragonfly. When Khalid unexpectedly passed away, he shed what was his first skin for another to live down by the bayou in their small Louisiana town. Khalid still visits in dreams, and King must keep these secrets to himself as he watches grief transform his family.

It would be easier if King could talk with his best friend, Sandy Sanders. But just days before he died, Khalid told King to end their friendship, after overhearing a secret about Sandy — that he thinks he might be gay. “You don’t want anyone to think you’re gay too, do you?” But when Sandy goes missing, sparking a town-wide search, and King finds his former best friend hiding in a tent in his backyard, he agrees to help Sandy escape from his abusive father, and the two begin an adventure as they build their own private paradise down by the bayou and among the dragonflies. As King’s friendship with Sandy is reignited, he’s forced to confront questions about himself and the reality of his brother’s death.

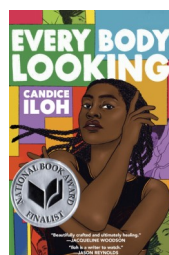
Top 4 Finalists:



Chee, Traci
We Are Not Free

YA Chee
Gr. 7 and up

For fourteen-year-old budding artist Minoru Ito, her two brothers, her friends, and the other members of the Japanese-American community in southern California, the three months since Pearl Harbor was attacked have become a waking nightmare. They have been attacked, spat on, and abused with no way to retaliate. Now things are about to get worse, their lives forever changed by the mass incarcerations in the relocation camps.



Iloh, Candice
Every Body Looking

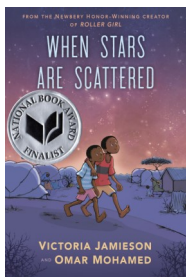
YA Iloh
Gr. 8 and up

“Ada” means first daughter, means oldest girl, means most pressure. When Ada leaves home for her freshman year at a historical Black college, it's the first time that she's been able to make her own choices. As she stumbles deeper into the world of dance and explores her sexuality, she also begins to wrestle with her past-- her mother's struggle with addiction, her Nigerian father's attempts to make a home for her. Will she find the courage to shape a life of her own?

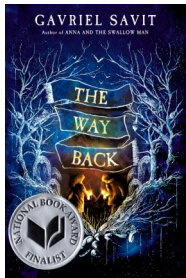
This booklist may be found at: <https://www.nationalbook.org/awards-prizes/national-book-awards-2020/>. To learn more about the National Book Award and the National Book Foundation, visit: <https://www.nationalbook.org/>
Accessed January 29, 2021



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February 2021

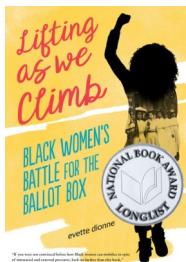


Jamieson, Victoria and Omar Mohamed
When Stars Are Scattered
 J B Mohamed Ja or J GN B Mohamed Ja
 Gr. 4 and up
 Omar and his younger brother, Hassan, have spent most of their lives in Dadaab, a refugee camp in Kenya. Life is hard there: never enough food, achingly dull, and without access to the medical care Omar knows his nonverbal brother needs. So when Omar has the opportunity to go to school, he knows it might be a chance to change their future...but it would also mean leaving his brother, the only family member he has left, every day.

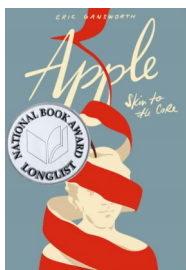


Savit, Gavriel
The Way Back
 YA Savit
 Gr. 7 and up
 If the world of the living were a suit of clothes and the world of the dead the bony flesh beneath, then at each elbow there would be a cemetery gate. Here the dead rub up against the living world. Here the living world wears thin. Yehuda Leib and Bluma have separate, unexpected meetings with The Dark One: Death. Meetings which push them on journeys far from their homes across the Far Country – the world of the dead...

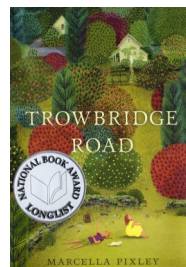
Longlist Nominees:



Dionne, Evette
Lifting as We Climb: Black Women's Battle for the Ballot Box
 YA 324.62309 Di
 Gr. 5 and up
 Women of color, especially African American women, were fighting for their right to vote and to be treated as full, equal citizens of the United States. Their battlefield wasn't just about gender. African American women had to deal with white abolitionist-suffragists who drew the line at sharing power with their black sisters. They had to overcome deep, exclusionary racial prejudices that were rife in the American suffrage movement. And they had to maintain their dignity—and safety—in a society that tried to keep them in its bottom ranks. Lifting as We Climb is the empowering story of African American women who refused to accept all this. Women in black church groups, black female sororities, black women's improvement societies and social clubs. Women who formed their own black suffrage associations when white-dominated national suffrage groups rejected them...



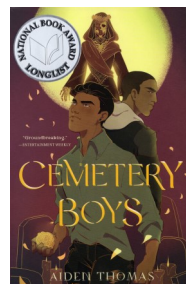
Gansworth, Eric
Apple (Skin to the Core)
 YA B Gansworth Ga or YA 970.00497 Ga
 Gr. 7 and up
 The term "Apple" is a slur in Native communities across the country. It's for someone supposedly "red on the outside, white on the inside." Eric Gansworth is telling his story in Apple (Skin to the Core). The story of his family, of Onondaga among Tuscaroras, of Native folks everywhere. From the horrible legacy of the government boarding schools, to a boy watching his siblings leave and return and leave again, to a young man fighting to be an artist who balances multiple worlds. Eric shatters that slur and reclaims it in verse and prose and imagery that truly lives up to the word heartbreaking.



Pixley, Marcella
Trowbridge Road
 YA Pixley
 Gr. 5 and up
 It's the summer of '83 on Trowbridge Road, and June Bug Jordan is hungry. Months after her father's death from complications from AIDS, her mother has stopped cooking and refuses to leave the house, instead locking herself away to scour at the germs she believes are everywhere. June Bug threatens this precarious existence by going out into the neighborhood, gradually be-friending Ziggy, an imaginative boy who is living with his Nana Jean after experiencing troubles of his own. But as June Bug's connection to the world grows stronger, her mother's grows more distant – even dangerous – pushing June Bug to choose between truth and healing and the only home she has ever known.



Rocco, John
How We Got to the Moon: The People, Technology, and Daring Feats of Science Behind Humanity's Greatest Adventure
 J 629.454 Ro
 Gr. 5 and up
 Everyone knows of Neil Armstrong's famous first steps on the moon. But what did it really take to get us there?
 The Moon landing is one of the most ambitious, thrilling, and dangerous ventures in human history. This exquisitely researched and illustrated book tells the stories of the 400,000 unsung heroes—the engineers, mathematicians, seamstresses, welders, and factory workers—and their innovations and life-changing technological leaps forward that allowed NASA to achieve this unparalleled accomplishment.
 From the shocking launch of the Russian satellite Sputnik to the triumphant splashdown of Apollo 11, Caldecott Honor winner John Rocco answers every possible question about this world-altering mission. Each challenging step in the space race is revealed, examined, and displayed through stunning diagrams, experiments, moments of crisis, and unforgettable human stories.



Thomas, Aiden
Cemetery Boys
 YA Thomas
 Gr. 8 and up
 Yadiel has summoned a ghost, and now he can't get rid of him.
 When his traditional Latinx family has problems accepting his true gender, Yadiel becomes determined to prove himself a real brujo. With the help of his cousin and best friend Maritza, he performs the ritual himself, and then sets out to find the ghost of his murdered cousin and set it free.
 However, the ghost he summons is actually Julian Diaz, the school's resident bad boy, and Julian is not about to go quietly into death. He's determined to find out what happened and tie off some loose ends before he leaves. Left with no choice, Yadiel agrees to help Julian, so that they can both get what they want. But the longer Yadiel spends with Julian, the less he wants to let him leave.