**Mountain Dog**
By Margarita Engle

**Citation:**

**Annotation:**
When his mother goes to prison, Tony is sent to Sierra, Nevada to live with his great-uncle. With the help of Gabe, his uncle’s search-and-rescue dog, Tony not only learns survival skills, he also learns how to trust again.

**Booktalk:**
Eleven year old Tony has to move to Sierra Nevada with his forest ranger great uncle, following his mother’s arrest for dog fighting. Tony quickly connects with Gabe, his uncle’s search and rescue dog. This story is told in free verse that alternates between Tony and Gabe’s point of view.

**Reviews and Lists:**
*Booklist* 08/01/13  
*Horn Book Magazine* 04/01/14  
*Kirkus Reviews* starred 06/15/13  
*School Library Journal* 09/01/13  

**Website:**
www.margaritaengle.com

**Other books by Margarita Engle:**
*Orangutanka: A Story in Poems*  
*Tiny Rabbit’s Big Wish*  
*When You Wander: A Search-and–Rescue Dog Story*
Fortunately, the Milk
By Neil Gaiman

Citation:

Annotation:
An ordinary day turns extraordinary when a simple trip to the store is met with aliens, time-travel, talking dinosaurs, pirates, and much more.

Book Talk:
What happens when mom is away and dad is left in charge? You run out of milk, of course. And when dad returns from the store, after a terribly long time, he explains the unbelievable, incredible, action packed adventure that he went on just so you could have milk for your cereal. Time travel, talking dinosaurs, aliens, and wumpires are only a few of the things that this dad encounters on his journey to fetch the milk.

Reviews:
*Booklist* 07/01/2013
*Publishers Weekly* 07/15/2013
*Kirkus* 07/01/2013

Author Website:
[www.neilgaiman.com](http://www.neilgaiman.com)

Other Books by Neil Gaiman:
*Coraline*
*Crazy Hair*
*The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish*
*The Graveyard Book*
*M is for Magic*
*Odd and the Frost Giants*
Words with Wings
By Nikki Grimes

Citation:

Annotation:
Gabby has always been a dreamer, and a divorce and new school only confuse her more. How will she ever be successful at school, make friends or please her mom?

Book Talk:
“What am I going to do with you? You have to start paying attention in school.” That’s what Gabriella’s mom says to her, and all her teachers know she’s a dreamer. Is that really such a bad thing, or is it just that her mom wants her to be more like her and less like her dad? When struggling to fit into a new school and adjust to her parent’s divorce, Gabby is confused about how to be everything that is expected yet also be herself.

Reviews:
Booklist
School Library Journal
Kirkus Reviews
Horn Book
Publishers Weekly

Author Website:
http://www.nikkigrimes.com

Some Additional Books by Nikki Grimes:
Come Sunday
A Day with Daddy
Danitra Brown, Class Clown
A Dime a Dozen
It’s Raining Laughter
Meet Danitra Brown
Shoe Magic

Charlie Bumpers vs. The Teacher of the Year
By Bill Harley

Citation:
Harley, Bill. **Charlie Bumpers vs. the Teacher of the Year**. Atlanta, Georgia: Peachtree Publishers, 2013. 138p. (Grades 3-5).

Annotation:
Charlie Bumpers is horrified to find his name on Mrs. Burke’s fourth grade class list. Mrs. Burke is the Teacher of the Year and she is also the strictest teacher in the entire school! Charlie is very worried because he and Mrs. Burke had an altercation during the previous school year. Things get much worse for Charlie until...he discovers Mrs. Burke’s secret.

Booktalk:
Have you ever dreamed of being a student in the strictest teacher’s class at your school? Well...Charlie Bumpers is living that nightmare! He is fearful that an innocent incident from the previous school year has sealed his fate with Mrs. Burke. Find out what Charlie did that caused trouble and what kind of teacher Mrs. Burke really is when you read **Charlie Bumper vs. the Teacher of the Year**!

Reviews:
*School Library Journal*
*Kirkus*
*Publishers Weekly*

Author website:
[http://www.billharley.com](http://www.billharley.com)

Other books by the author:
*Dirty Joe, the Pirate: A True Story*
*Lost and Found*
*Sarah's Story*

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**The Worm Whisperer**

By Betty Hicks
Citation:

Annotation:
Ellis lives on a farm, working hard to help his family make ends meet, and jumps at the opportunity to help his family out of a crisis by entering the Wooly Worm Race. While preparing for the race, he discovers a caterpillar who seems to follow his directions.

Booktalk:
Ellis Coffey lives on a farm with his parents, who struggle to make ends meet. His dad needs back surgery but they can’t afford the insurance deductible. Luckily, Ellis loves spending time with animals and discovers he is a Worm Whisperer, which comes in handy for the annual Wooly Worm Race. The race has a $1000 grand prize, which is just what his parents need. Ellis spends all his extra time outside of school doing his farm chores and training Tink to be the fastest worm in town and along the way learns what wooly worms like to eat and what motivates them.

Can Ellis learn enough about wooly worms to fully train Tink? Or will he be sabotaged by a last-minute substitution? Will his dad be able to have the surgery? To find out the answers to these questions and more, read The Worm Whisperer by Betty Hicks and discover for yourself.

Reviews:
Kirkus Reviews
Publishers Weekly
The Horn Book
School Library Journal

Author Website:
http://us.macmillan.com/author/bettyhicks#

Other Books by Betty Hicks:
I Smell Like Ham
Get Real
Out of Order
Busted!

The Great Trouble: A Mystery of London, the Blue Death, and a Boy Called Eel
By Deborah Hopkinson

Annotation:
Eel, an orphan living in London, combs the muddy banks of the Thames River for bits of things to sell, during the deadly 1854 outbreak of cholera. While Eel is hunted by a mean crook named Fisheye Bill Tyler, he and his friend Florrie, help Dr. Snow conduct scientific research to determine the true cause of the epidemic.

Book Talk:
Thirteen-year-old Eel is an orphan who lives on the streets of London in 1854. Life is rough as he tries to avoid his stepfather, the evil Fisheye Bill Taylor, and a bully named Ned while he searches the muddy Thames River for anything he can sell. Eel’s troubles get even worse when a mysterious disease kills people in his Broad Street neighborhood. Eel plays an important part in helping Dr. Snow who has a theory that the cholera disease is spread through water instead of poisonous air.

Reviews:
Publisher’s Weekly October 2013

Author Website:
www.deborahhopkinson.com

Other Books by Deborah Hopkinson:
Sky Boys, How They Built the Empire State Building-2006
Sweet Land of Liberty-2008
Keep On! The Story of Matthew Henson, Co-Discoverer of the North Pole-2009
Knit Your Bit, a World War I Story-2013
Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt-1993
Into the Firestorm-2006

The Adventures of a South Pole Pig
By Chris Kurtz

Citation:

**Annotation:**
Flora, an innocent young pig, who has never left the farm, is convinced she is destined to live an adventurous life and embarks on a trip to the South Pole. Her greatest wish is to show her worth as a sled-pig. Flora must survive the elements of the Antarctic and avoid being a meal for the shipwrecked crew and teach a snooty, independent cat and the lead sled-dog the value of teamwork.

**Book Talk:**
Can an innocent piglet named Flora learn to pull a sled alongside trained huskies and avoid being a meal for hungry shipwrecked sailors? When Flora finds herself chained to a box in a rat-infested hold of a ship headed for Antarctica it seems doubtful. Her only friend is a snooty cat who does not understand the idea of teamwork and a lowly cabin boy.

**Reviews:**
*School Library Journal* August 2013
*Publisher’s Weekly* January 2013

**Author Website:**
http://chriskurtzauthor.com

**Other Books by Chris Kurtz:**
*The Pup Who Cried Wolf*-April 2010
*Water Hole Waiting*-March 2002
*Only a Pigeon*-May 1997

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*Elvis and the Underdogs*
By Jenny Lee

**Citation:**

**Annotation:**
Friendless, sickly, ten year old Benji, acquires both friends and a talking 200 pound Newfoundland named Elvis, who is supposed to be the presidential dog but mistakenly ends up as Benji’s service dog.

**Book Talk:**
Ten year old Benji has always felt like a misfit. He is small and constantly in and out of the hospital with illnesses, allergies, and fainting spells. He has become the favorite target of the class bully. When he suffers a seizure and ends up in the hospital, his only alternative to wearing a protective helmet is to get a therapy dog. When his therapy dog, Parker Elvis Pembroke IV, a Newfoundland arrives, Benji finds out he is a talking dog that only Benji can hear!

**Reviews:**
*Booklist* starred 4/01/13  
*Horn Book Magazine* 11/01/13  
*School Library Journal* 06/01/13

**Website:**  
elvisandtheunderdogs.com

**Other books by the author:**
*Elvis and the Underdogs: Secrets, Secret Service and Room Service*

*This book would be a good read aloud, and to use to talk about the subject of bullying.*

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**White Fur Flying**  
Patricia MacLachlan

**Citation:**  
Annotation:
Zoe’s family rescues dogs and the new neighborhood family has a young boy who refuses to speak. Who knew that a dog that was rescued would end up rescuing someone else right back?

Book Talk:
Zoe’s family has a unique pastime. They rescue dogs in need and try to find good homes for them. Zoe’s house is always full of fur, noise, and fun. But when a new neighbor moves in next door who is as silent as Zoe’s house is loud, Zoe’s goal is to get him to start talking again. As her parents rescue dogs, Zoe tries to rescue Phillip from himself while discovering that maybe Phillip and a dog can rescue each other.

Excerpt:
“He doesn’t have to talk,” said Alice.
“That’s what Mama said.”

But why didn’t he talk? Was he afraid? Was he sad? He must have talked once, maybe when he was a baby? When he was little? Maybe he had talked last week. Why not now?

Reviews:
School Library Journal
Booklist
Publisher’s Weekly
Kirkus

Author Informational Websites:
http://www.harpercollins.com/cr-100342/patricia-maclachlan
http://authors.simonandschuster.com/Patricia-MacLachlan/38022587
http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/contributor/patricia-maclachlan

Other Books by Patricia MacLachlan:
All the Places to Love
Caleb’s Story
Edward’s Eyes
Fly Away
Grandfather’s Dance
Kindred Souls
Sarah, Plain, and Tall
Chews Your Destiny: The Gumazing Gum Girl!
By Rhode Montijo

Citation:

Annotation:
Gabby Gomez’s constant gum chewing creates a lot of trouble in her life. After sneaking a piece of gum one morning Gabby becomes the Gumazing Gum Girl and her troubles take a turn toward adventure as Gum Girl comes to the rescue.

**Booktalk:**
What if the simple act of chewing gum and blowing bubbles could turn you into a super-hero? Gabby Gomez doesn’t have to ask that question because she knows the answer. When a huge bubble surrounds Gabby she discovers that she has the power to stretch farther than humanly possible, fly higher than the laws of gravity allow and save people in need of saving. However, Gabby still can’t escape her mom, her teacher or the class bully. To find how Gabby Gomez becomes a superhero read *The Gumazing Gum Girl! Chews Your Destiny* by Rhode Montijo.

**Reviews:**
*School Library Journal*, Volume 59, Issue 7  
*Publishers Weekly*, Volume 260, Issue 16  
*Kirkus Reviews*, May 2013

**Titles by Rhode Montijo:**
*The Halloween Kid*  
*Cloud Boy*

**Read Alikes:**
Frankie Pickle Series – Eric Wigt  
Dragonbreath Series – Ursula Vernon

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**To Dare Mighty Things: The Life of Theodore Roosevelt**  
By Doreen Rappaport

**Citation:**

**Annotation:**
Theodore Roosevelt grows from a sickly young boy who loves to read about adventures to living those adventures as a Rough Rider, police commissioner, governor, and eventually President of the United States.

**Booktalk:**
Teddy, as Theodore Roosevelt is known as a child, is a sickly young boy who lives adventures through reading. But through hard work and determination, as a young man he becomes strong enough to experience adventures first hand. Theodore serves the United States of America in many ways: through exploration, military service, public service and eventually as the 26th President.

**Reviews:**
*School Library Journal*
*Booklist*
*Horn Book*

**Author’s Website:**
doreenrappaport.com

**Other biographies by Doreen Rappaport:**
*Martin’s Big Words*
*Eleanor, Quiet No More*
*Helen’s Big World*
*Abe’s Honest Words*
*Jack’s Path of Courage*
*John’s Secret Dreams*

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**Sugar**

By Jewell Parker Rhodes

**Citation:**

**Annotation:**
After the Civil War, ten year old Sugar and her family must find a way to deal with the changes in the south and the Chinese workers that are hired to help on the sugar plantation.

**Booktalk:**
Ten year old Sugar has lived her life working on a Louisiana sugar plantation. Her days are full of hard work but she is a lively, happy child who has found ways to enjoy her life. After the Civil War, change comes to the plantation and people are worried. How will they live their life now?

When Chinese workers are hired to help with the sugar harvest, everyone’s worries are multiplied. But Sugar is curious about the lives of these new people and she finds a way to bring everyone together for a common good.

**Reviews:**
*School Library Journal*
*Booklist*
*Kirkus starred review*

**Author’s website:**
[http://www.jewelparkerrhodes.com](http://www.jewelparkerrhodes.com)
Website includes teaching resources, trivia questions, and a video trailer about Sugar.

**Other children’s books by author:**
*Ninth Ward*
*Bayou Magic*

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**Rump: The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin**
By Liesl Shurtliff

**Citation:**

**Annotation:**
When Rump discovers that he can turn straw into gold he is also warned that magic comes at a price. In this retelling of Rumpelstiltskin, Rump’s troubles go from bad to worse when the more he tries to fix his problems, the more entangled in them he becomes.

**Booktalk:**  
Everyone is familiar with the tale of Rumpelstiltskin, the impish man who helped the miller’s daughter spin straw into gold in exchange for her first born child. As with all legends, the truth is often lost over time.

This retelling is about Rump, who is not evil or malicious. He is merely a boy who discovers he has an unusual talent, which ends up causing him more trouble than he ever could have imagined. He grew up never knowing his full name. And in a land where your name is your destiny, only having half a name can be quite problematic. He is short for his age and, with a name like Rump, his classmates tease him constantly. When he discovers he can turn straw into gold, he hopes that things will finally start to turn around. However, he is warned that magic comes at a price, and unfortunately his problems go from bad to worse. And the more he tries to fix his problems, the more entangled in them he becomes. Rump must go out to discover his full name and hopefully find a way to unravel the mess he has gotten himself into.

If you like fairy tales, enjoy adventure or mystery, or simply want a fun, quick read then this book is for you.

**Reviews:**  
*School Library Journal* 05/01/2013  
*Publishers Weekly* 03/25/2013  
*Kirkus* 03/15/2013

**Author Website:**  

**Other Books by Liesl Shurtliff:**  
*Jack: The True Story of Jack and the Beanstalk*
Becoming Babe Ruth
By Matt Tavares

Citation:

Annotation:
Learn little known details about George Herman Ruth’s life before he became “The Great Bambino”.

Booktalk:
Babe Ruth wasn’t always a hometown hero. Thanks to tough love from his father, the gentle guidance of a teacher, and much practice, George Herman Ruth became one of the most successful major league baseball players of all time.

Reviews:
Citation:

Annotation:
Sam loves to go fishing with his dad but he really doesn’t want his vexatious little sister to go along, relish the delightful poems and endearing illustrations about one lively trip and enjoy the “Poet’s Tackle Box” of poetry techniques at the end.

Booktalk:
Sam cannot wait to go fishing with his dad on Saturday. A Saturday in the sun at the lake just relaxing on the boat and casting the day away. Sam plans out exactly how everything is going to go. The one thing he doesn't plan for is for his little sister Lucy to come along on the trip when it was supposed to be, "just us two," Sam and Dad. Written in verse with different forms of poetry throughout the text this book details just what you need to do to make a fishing trip successful.
and what happens if your little brother or sister comes along on your fishing trip. To find if Sam, Dad or Lucy catch the big one or will tell stories about the one that got away read *Gone Fishing: A Novel in Verse* by Tamera Will Wissinger.

**Author’s website:**
http://www.tamerawillwissinger.com/

**Illustrator’s website:**
http://www.matthewcordell.com

**Awards:**
ALSC 2014 Notable Children’s Book

**Reviews:**
*Kirkus*, 1/28/2013
*Publisher’s Weekly*, 12/24/2012
*School Library Journal*, 7/8/2013

**Other books by author:**
*There Was an Old Lady Who Gobbled a Skink*
*This Old Band*