

New Horizons
for Learning

Running Girl: The Diary of Ebonee Rose - African American

Written by Sharon Bell Mathis. 1997.
New York: Harcourt Brace & Company

Ebonee Rose is an eleven-year-old who uses her diary to talk about her fears and excitement leading up to the All-City track meet. She expresses her feelings, from anxiety about being the favored winner in her events, to the difficulty of making friends with the newest member of the track team. E.R. also idolizes African American female track and field star of the past and present, and tells readers of the women runners who inspire her. The book is filled with facts and photographs of these stars - Jackie Joyner-Kersey, Flo Jo, Wilma Rudolph and others. This book would be a confidence builder for any African American girl or track and field lover.

Asian American

Baseball Saved Us - Japanese American

Written by Ken Mochizuki, Illustrated by Dom Lee. 1993.
New York: Lee & Low Books Inc.

A Japanese boy and his family are moved to an internment camp in the early 1940's. The boy's father decides that they need a baseball field to help pass the time and to bring a sense of normalcy to the camp. Playing baseball seems to lift the spirits of the people, and the little boy is determined to overcome his small size by working hard at becoming a good player. After the war he again works hard at baseball, and despite the prejudice he faces, is respected by his teammates for his playing ability. The author addresses the prejudice Japanese people encountered after World War II, and discusses how to this boy, being called a "Jap" means that the kids "don't like him." The illustrations depict the darkness of the time, but also the hope that came with baseball and the potential for better times. The story should be told with sensitivity to a Japanese child, but would be a wonderful history lesson for all children.

Be Bop-A-Do-Walk! - Asian American

Written and Illustrated by Sheila Hamanaka. 1995.
New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

Emi begs her father to let her and her friend, Martha, go on a walk with him around New York. They stop at a bakery for treats, walk through Washington Square Park and past the Empire State Building, and stop in at the Museum of Modern Art before heading toward Central Park. While there, they feed the birds and float paper boats that Emi's father makes for them and all the other children at the pond. They then catch the bus home, making paper cranes for everyone on the bus. Children will love the adventure of a walk through New York City with all its tall buildings, though the story tends to jump around a bit. The illustrations are fun and the characters' faces expressive.

Grandfather's Journey - Japanese American

Written and Illustrated by Allen Say. 1993.
New York: Houghton Mifflin Company

The author tells the story of his own grandfather's journey from Japan to the United States, and the desire he and his grandfather share for returning to Japan. When they do take a trip to Japan, they feel like outsiders. Each expresses a love for both countries, and Say talks about how, when in one country, he always seems to miss the other. The story is written as if narrating a family album. The

full-page illustrations are personal snapshots of various times in Grandfather's life. It is a beautiful story for any child, but will ring with familiarity for families who may feel at home - and alienated - in two very different countries.

Halmoni and the Picnic - Korean American

Written by Sook Nyul Choi, Illustrated by Karen Dugan. 1993.

New York: Houghton Mifflin Company

Yunmi's grandmother, Halmoni, has just moved to New York from Korea and is finding it difficult to adjust to American culture. Yunmi hopes that having Halmoni chaperone a class trip to Central Park will help her feel more at home. But at the same time, Yunmi is worried that her classmates will not accept Halmoni's traditional Korean dress and the Korean food she has prepared for the trip. However, the kids welcome Halmoni and enjoy the kimbap - rice and vegetables wrapped in seaweed - and Halmoni begins to feel comfortable. Sook Nyul Choi tells a sensitive story of immigration and the difficulty of adjusting to a new culture. Korean American children will enjoy seeing aspects of their culture included in the story, and all children will relate to a desire to belong and the relationship Yunmi has with her grandmother. Dugan's colorful illustrations help tell the story.

In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson - Chinese American

Written by Bette Bao Lord, Illustrated by Marc Simont, Chapter book. 1984.

New York: Harper Trophy

The story begins in China with a young girl whose father has just sent for her and her mother to meet him in the United States. Shirley and her mother make the long trip to Brooklyn, New York in 1947 where her father has a job and Shirley begins school. Shirley has to deal with many issues, such as breaking the language barrier as she learns English and learning the traditions of her new country. Shirley works hard to catch up in school, learn how to play stickball, and make friends with neighbors and schoolmates. When baseball starts in April, Shirley develops a passion for the sport and becomes a Jackie Robinson fan. Jackie Robinson's fight to fit into the white world of baseball inspires Shirley. She yearns to fit in, yet still misses her family back in China. Shirley is a sensitive, caring and spunky character who will be loved by all readers.

Journey Home - Vietnamese American

Written by Lawrence McKay, Jr., Illustrated by Dom & Keunhee Lee. 1998.

New York: Lee & Low Books, Inc.

During the Vietnam War and at the age of two, Mai's mother was left at an orphanage. She was adopted and brought to the United States as a child, but is now seeking the identity of her birth parents. On their journey to Vietnam, Mai's mother searches for her family, but Mai must discover the meaning of "home" for herself. A story that will touch the heart of the reader, it may be familiar to some. Others may discover a feeling they have always taken for granted - that of knowing where you come from and where you belong. The illustrations convey the emotion of the journey with warmth and sensitivity.

Tea With Milk - Japanese American

Written and Illustrated by Allen Say. 1999.

New York: Houghton Mifflin Company

As with Grandfather's Journey, the author is telling a personal history, this time about his mother's journey from America to Japan around the 1950's. May is a teenager when her family moves back to Japan. She has to attend high school over again in Japan and has a difficult time making friends. She leaves her family's village to move to the city where she gets a job and meets a man who was educated in an English school. He is someone she can relate to. This book tells the story of

immigration, but with an emotional twist. Born American, May does not feel she belongs in her parent's country. The other kids in school call her a "foreigner," and Japanese traditions such as matchmaking are unfamiliar. Again, Say provides a story for people who feel they are from two countries. All children can relate to the desire to belong and will enjoy the rich, vibrant illustrations.

Yunmi and Halmoni's Trip - Korean American

Written by Sook Nyul Choi, Illustrated by Karen Dugan. 1997.

New York: Houghton Mifflin Company

Sook Nyul Choi and Karen Dugan team up again for Yunmi and Halmoni's trip to Korea. It is Yunmi's first trip to Korea, and Halmoni's first return since moving to New York to care for Yunmi. Once in Korea, Yunmi is kept busy on outings with her cousins. She is enjoying getting to know them and traveling around Seoul, but longs for a few minutes alone with Halmoni. She is afraid Halmoni has missed her home in Korea and will not want to go back to New York. When she does finally get some time with Halmoni she is assured that Halmoni is only preparing for another year in New York with Yunmi. This story, like the first one, gracefully portrays cross-cultural difficulties and intergenerational relationships. Dugan's pictures of Seoul are detailed and beautiful, though I cannot attest for their accuracy.

Native American

Crazy Horse's Vision - Lakota Indian

Written by Joseph Bruchac, Illustrated by S.D. Nelson. 2000.

New York: Lee & Low Books Inc.

Bruchac tells the story of a young Crazy Horse before he becomes a leader for his people. From birth he was believed to be special. People listened to him and followed him. But white men were beginning to change the life of the Lakota people and many were dying. Crazy Horse sought a vision so that he may know how to help his people. Nelson's illustrations are directly influenced by the ledger book drawings of Plains Indian artists in the late 1800's and early 1900's. There is an author's note and illustrator's note at the end of the book that offers the background of the story as well as a detailed description of the illustrations.

Dancing Teepees: Poems of American Indian Youth - Native American

Written by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve, Illustrated by Stephen Gammell. 1989.

New York: Holiday House

Sneve has compiled poems from the oral tradition of North American Indians and contemporary tribal poets. The selections reflect the themes of American Indian youth and represent many different tribes. Some are lullabies, some songs, and some are descriptions of the rites of passage from youth to adulthood. All reflect Native American youth. The illustrations depict the cultures of various tribes and complement the poetry beautifully.

Gift Horse - Lakota Indian

Written and Illustrated by S.D. Nelson. 1999.

New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

Gift Horse tells the story of a young Lakota Indian learning what it means to become a warrior. The story takes place when buffalo were plenty and other tribes were sometimes enemies. The book tells of traditional events that took place before a boy would be considered a man and a warrior, such as killing his first buffalo, joining the other men in the sweat lodge, and going on a Vision Quest. The colorful illustrations are directly influenced by the ledger book drawings of Plains Indian artists of the late 1800's and early 1900's. The author's note at the end of the story places a historical perspective on the text and the illustrations. Both are equally fascinating for all audiences.

Grandmother's Dreamcatcher - Chippewa

Written by Becky Ray McCain, Illustrated by Stacey Schuett. 1998.

Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Company

Kimmy, a young Chippewa girl, has been having bad dreams. She is staying with her Grandmother who shows her a dreamcatcher and tells her the story of its origin. Together they make a dreamcatcher for above Kimmy's bed. Kimmy's relationship with her Grandmother is warmly portrayed in both text and illustration. This picture book is one of very few contemporary depictions of Native American life, and the story will speak to all children. Children will relate to Kimmy's childhood fears and find comfort in the solution to her bad dreams.

The Heart of a Chief - Native American

Written by Joseph Bruchac. Chapter book. 1998.

New York: Dial Books for Young Readers

Chris lives on the Penacook Indian Reservation with his grandfather, aunt and sister. During the first half of his sixth grade year he is faced with some tough issues that will bring out his natural strength, determination and leadership abilities. Chris learns to stand up for his people and his beliefs in more ways than one. The story is told from a very personal viewpoint. Bruchac has sensitively brought fourth issues faced by contemporary Native Americans, a rare perspective in contemporary literature.

Jingle Dancer - Muscogee/Ojibway

Written by Cynthia Leitich Smith, Illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright & Ying-Hwa Yu. 2000.

New York: Morrow Junior Books

Jenna is a young Muscogee and Ojibway Indian girl who longs to follow in her grandmother's footsteps as a jingle dancer. Since there is not enough time before the next powwow to mail order the tin for her dress, she finds another way to add "voice" to her dress. Smith's note at the end of the book provides a good background for the story as well as additional information about jingle dancing and the Muscogee and Ojibway Nations. The illustrations add a very contemporary feel to the story while also maintaining aspects of Native American culture. All children will enjoy the simple story and the warmth of the pictures.

Powwow - Native American

Written and Photographed by George Ancona. 1993.

New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers

Informative text and colorful photographs depict a contemporary Powwow that takes place annually on the Crow Reservation in Montana. While the story begins and ends with a boy performing in his first Powwow dance, the rest of the book describes aspects of dress and dance style. Over the years, dancers' clothes have become a combination of past and present traditions and of the traditions of various Native American groups. Not just one tribe or group is represented at the powwow. This story and the annual powwow event both represent how Native American tribes have unified and work together to keep the beliefs and traditions of their people alive.

Latino and Hispanic

A Birthday Basket for Tía - Mexican American

Written by Pat Mora, Illustrated by Cecily Lang. 1992.

New York: Aladdin Paperbacks

This story tells of a young girl looking for the perfect birthday present for her Tía, or great-aunt. While her mother bakes and prepares for the surprise party, Cecelia and her cat search the house. They find wonderful memories and treasures to include in the birthday basket. The story integrates

many Spanish words in to the text, though the reading level is for younger readers. Both text and illustrations convey the importance of Cecelia's and Tía's relationship. The colorful pictures appear to be paper cut and pasted to form the images. Children will love the detail of the illustrations, and will find familiarity with the special inter-generation relationship.

All for the Better - Puerto Rican American

Written by Nicholasa Mohr, Illustrated by Rudy Gutierrez. Chapter book. 1993.

Austin TX: Raintree Steck-Vaughn

Evelina is a young girl when she moves to New York from her home in Puerto Rico. It is during the Depression and money is tight. Evelina lives with her aunt and uncle, who have no children of their own, until her mother and sisters have enough money to come to New York too. During her stay, Evelina finds out that her friends and neighbors are too proud to take the government assistance being offered to them, so she decides to get it for them. In the process, they learn how to help themselves. This is the beginning of the story of how Evelina Lopez Antonetty helped the people of her neighborhood get what they deserved - recognition, a good education, and local businesses. Notes at the back of the book tell of her life accomplishments, including groups she founded that are still active today. This is a story of the success of a young girl getting used to a new place, as well as of a community working together. All children will enjoy the story line and will also learn about the hardships of being a minority during the Depression.

Amelia's Road - Mexican American

Written by Linda Jacobs Altman, Illustrated by Enrique Sanchez. 1993.

New York: Lee & Low Books Inc.

Amelia and her family are migrant farm workers, moving from harvest to harvest living in labor camps. Amelia also moves from school to school, never really making friends or feeling that she belongs. One day during apple harvest, Amelia finds a special place. Everyday she visits. Just as she is beginning to feel at home in her special place it is time to move. Amelia must find a way to keep that feeling of belonging. While the story is about a child in a migrant family, all children will understand Amelia's desire to feel that she belongs and will applaud her determination to keep her special place in her heart. The warm illustrations are an added bonus to a sensitively told story.

Barrio: José's Neighborhood - Mexican American

Written and Photographed by George Ancona. 1998.

San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace & Company

This is one boy's story of life in a diverse neighborhood in San Francisco. It is also a story of the colorful and diverse neighborhood itself. José lives in a neighborhood where people speak Spanish and English, and even Chinese. His elementary school is named after a Mexican American figure. There are murals around the neighborhood depicting the cultures represented in the barrio. Markets offer foods for all types of cooking. Events and festivities also reflect the many cultures found in the barrio. The vivid photographs offer an insider's view of life in the barrio and in José's home. Readers will see inside a different life that is yet very similar to their own.

Confetti: Poems for Children - Mexican American

Written by Pat Mora, Illustrated by Enrique Sanchez. 1996.

New York: Lee & Low Books, Inc.

This book offers poetry selections focused on Spanish Southwest. Poems have varying themes, such as Mexican food, animal woodcarvings, nature, and one about the Tarahumaras, the indigenous people of northern Mexico. The illustrations are soft, but colorful and follow the theme of Mexico and the Southwestern United States. This is a collection for all children, but Spanish speaking children will enjoy reading the Spanish words throughout and seeing their culture

displayed so beautifully.

The Faithful Friend - West Indian

Written by Robert San Souci, Illustrated by Brian Pinkney. 1995.

New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

This is a tale of two friends who set out on an adventure, only to be threatened by danger. One learns of evil against the other and must protect his unknowing friend. He eventually gives his life to the friend, but the friend is then given the chance to return the gesture. San Souci combines the best of several versions of this Latin American tale to emphasize a friendship between black and white characters, and to give the story a distinctly West Indian flavor. The resulting story has suspense, romance, and strong ties of friendship. Pinkney's illustrations convey the beauty of the Caribbean and the darkness of the evil that lurks in the forest. Children and adults alike will enjoy the interwoven text and illustrations, and the intrigue and warmth of the story.

Farolitos for Abuelo - Mexican American

Written by Rudolfo Anaya, Illustrated by Edward Gonzales. 1998.

New York: Hyperion Books for Children

Set in a rural Southwest town, a young girl finds a way to cope with the passing of her grandfather. Farolitos, sand filled paper bags with candles in them, are a traditional way of celebrating Christmas for Luz and her family. Luz also uses them in remembrance of her grandfather and begins a new tradition in the small town. The illustrations sensitively depict the bond between Luz and her grandfather, as well as the sorrow felt by the little girl. All children will understand the importance of Luz's love for her grandfather, and will learn a lot from the way she deals with his death.

Grannie Jus' Come! - Panama

Written by Ana Sisnett, Illustrated by Karen Lusebrink. 1997.

San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press

Set in Panama, the story conveys the loving relationship between a little girl and her grandma. Excited about Grannie's visit, the young girl tells her grandmother all the little things she loves about her. The warm dialogue between the girl and her grannie is accentuated by the Caribbean English dialect. The pictures depict the expressive faces of the characters and the bright colors of their emotions. Children will love both the rhythmic dialogue and the detail of the illustrations. At the end of the story, the author writes of her own childhood in Panama and growing up speaking the Caribbean English of her parents. A picture book set in Central America based on the experiences of the author is a rare find. This one will be enjoyed.

In My Family/En Mi Familia - Mexican American

Written and Illustrated by Carmen Lomas Garza. 1996.

San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press

Garza writes about and illustrates aspects of life in her family. Each illustration is accompanied by text in both English and Spanish describing a tradition, event or memory from her childhood. The descriptions are very personal, and the vivid and colorful illustrations include family members and close friends engaged in the activities discussed in the text. The book is a family album for Garza, and is a glimpse into the life of a Mexican American child for her readers. Some readers may find unfamiliar images in the book, but they will also find much familiarity.

Magic Windows/Ventanas Magicas - Mexican American

Written and Illustrated by Carmen Lomas Garza. 1999.

San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press

A book for readers of all ages, Garza's papel picado, cut-paper art, and text describe Mexican traditions, history, and Garza's personal stories. The historical or personal significance behind each piece of papel picado is described in both English and Spanish text. Garza also describes how each piece was cut and where the lines are connected to create a piece that will stay together. The papel picado itself has significance in the Mexican culture as a traditional form of folk art. Garza learned it from her grandmother and uses the pieces in this book to create "windows" to another world. As with her book *In My Family/En Mi Familia*, much of the book's content is personal. Readers will learn from the text as well as connect with it.

The Red Comb - Puerto Rican

Written by Fernando Picó, Illustrated by María Antonia Ordóñez. 1991.

BridgeWater Books

The story takes place in 19th century Puerto Rico where a young girl discovers a runaway slave on her property. Knowing that her father and other villagers will take advantage of the slave by returning her for extra money, the girl gains the help of an elderly neighbor. Between them, they help the slave girl escape. The issue of slavery is dealt with sensitively, though the village characters address both sides of the issue in their dialogue. The author has used historical documents and folklore to create the characters and describe their actions. The illustrations portray the countryside and the colorful characters with warmth and sensitivity. Children will love the tricks played by the old woman and the expressions on the faces of the characters.

Señor Cat's Romance - Latin America

Retold by Lucía González, Illustrated by Lulu Delacre. 1997.

New York: Scholastic Press

This collection of stories includes six of Latin America's best-known and best-loved folk tales. Juan Bobo is the favorite fool in many Latin American tales, and "The Little Half-Chick" tells of the origin of weather vanes. Animal characters are abundant and some are given human qualities, such as the title character Señor Cat who lives in seventeenth-century Spain. González combined many versions of the stories to create the selections in this book. The stories are the Latin American equivalent of tales such as "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" and "Little Red Riding Hood." Children will enjoy the antics of the characters and the colorful illustrations. There is an informative introduction as well as an illustrator's note at the end of the book.

Under the Royal Palms - Cuban

Written by Alma Flor Ada. Chapter book. 1998.

New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers

Ada tells the story of her childhood in Camagüey, Cuba. Through stories about bats living in the roof of the house, getting lost in the marabú bushes with her cousin, and Uncle Medardo's tragic accident, Ada reminisces about the events and relationships that helped shape who she is today. It is a story that will have readers laughing one moment and crying the next. Readers will empathize with stories similar to their own childhood experiences. The photographs of Ada and her family members make personal connections even stronger.

[Sample Literature Evaluation Form](#)

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About the Author:

Jennifer Johnson Higgins received a B.A. in Psychology with a minor in Sociology from Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA in 1995. She received a teaching certificate in elementary education and Masters in Education at Antioch University Seattle in June of 2000. She has substitute taught for several years in the Seattle area and the St. Paul, MN area; she taught 2nd and 3rd grade in Edmonds, WA; and she is currently working with at risk youth in the 21st Century Learning Centers in the Marysville and Mukilteo School Districts in Washington State. You may contact her at jennisuzanne@hotmail.com.

