

# CELEBRATING THE 2017 NOTABLE POETRY LIST



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**THE COMMITTEE FOR THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH (NCTE) AWARD** for Excellence in Children's Poetry Notable Books Award has selected 19 books published in 2016 for the Poetry Notables list for 2017. The titles were read and evaluated by committee members based on the language in the poems, the use of poetic devices, subject matter, and appropriateness for children ages three to 13. The form and structure of poems are evaluated to see that the mood or subject is well represented. The Notables list also includes anthologies and collections of poems. In some cases, these are newly published poems, while other titles include works of a classic or contemporary children's poet that is newly illustrated or edited into a fresh collection.

The NCTE Excellence in Children's Poetry Award started in 1977 with the purpose of recognizing the work of outstanding poets in the field of children's literature. The award has evolved and now, in addition to selecting an annual Notable Poetry list, the committee also selects an annual Verse Novel list and every two years names an outstanding poet. This year's Verse Novel list includes eight titles, and the poet of excellence is Marilyn Nelson. For a list of past recipients and other notable poetry resources, visit the NCTE website: <http://www.ncte.org/awards/poetry>

## THE 2017 NOTABLE POETRY LIST

**BLANCO, Richard.** *One Today: The Inaugural Poem for President Barack Obama.* illus. by Dav Pilkey. Little, Brown. Tr \$18. ISBN 9780316371445.

This inspiring picture book was first read to the public at the second inauguration of President Barack Obama in 2012. The poem opens with "One sun rose on us today..." and continues with descriptions of one light, one ground, and one sky, emphasizing our unity as a nation. But poet Richard Blanco also uses words to paint every color available ("...pencil-yellow school buses...traffic lights...fruit stands...arrayed like rainbows...") as a reminder to Americans to celebrate diversity. An important moment in American presidential history is presented here.

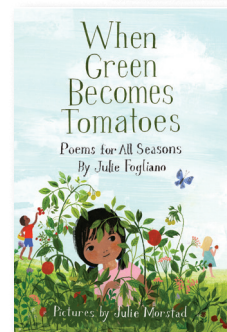
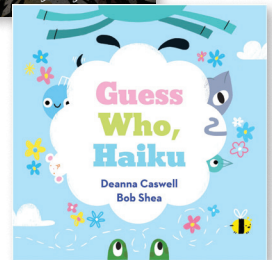
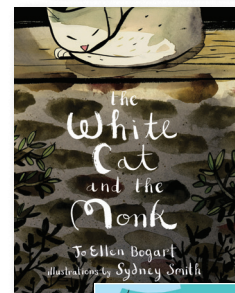
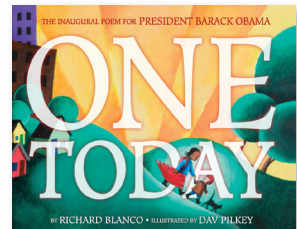
**BOGART, Jo Ellen.** *The White Cat and the Monk.* illus. by Sydney Smith. Groundwood. Tr \$18.95. ISBN 9781554987801.

The author's dedication, "To those who seek light in the darkness," is a fitting opening for this gentle story of a ninth century Benedictine Irish monk writing a dual message poem about his cat but more importantly, the search for knowledge. Based on an old poem written by a monk whose name was never known, this short poem has survived through the centuries and been written and rewritten but the message remains. Watercolor and ink illustrations on thick paper enhance the medieval atmosphere.

**CASWELL, Deanna.** *Guess Who, Haiku.* illus. by Bob Shea. Abrams Appleseed. Tr \$14.95. ISBN 9781419718892.

*Guess Who, Haiku* offers a guessing game to young children. Each page features a playful haiku about an animal, followed by the question: "Can you guess who from this haiku?" The subject of the poem is pictured on the following page and poses another haiku for readers to solve, creating a chain of riddles and answers. An author's note provides information about the poetry form. Bob Shea's brightly colored mixed-media illustrations add to the fun.

**FOGLIANO, Julie.** *When Green Becomes Tomatoes: Poems for All Seasons.* illus. by Julie Morstad. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter Bks. Tr \$18.99. ISBN 9781596438521. Language tickles the senses in this journal-style book of poetry. In "march 20" one bird





sings, “each tweet poking/a tiny hole/through the edge of winter/and landing carefully/ balancing gently/on the tip of spring” On “october 22,” the narrator begs “october please/go back to bed/your sneezing woke december.” Delicately bold gouache and pencil crayon art washes each page in seasonal colors.

**HARRISON, David L.** *Now You See Them, Now You Don't: Poems about Creatures That Hide.*

illus. by Giles Laroche. Charlesbridge. Tr \$17.95. ISBN 9781580896108.

Colorful cut-paper relief illustrations bring the protective camouflage coloration of animals in their original habitats to life as readers peek through grasses and swamps and forests looking for the hidden creatures. Many of the 19 poems are on spreads that describe the traits of each animal and how they survive in nature. In some cases the animals are hiding to avoid being eaten, in other situations they are the predator. The final pages of the book offer additional scientific information organized by animal classification.

**KANEKO, Misuzu.** *Are You an Echo? The Lost Poetry of Misuzu Kaneko.* tr. from Japanese by David Jacobson, Sally Ito & Michiko Tsuboi. illus. by Toshikado Hajiri. Chin Music Pr. Tr \$19.50 ISBN 9781634059626.

“Who was Misuzu Kaneko”? That is what Setsuo, the protagonist, whose narrative weaves Kaneko’s poetry together into a study of her and her work, wants to know. Yet this is more than a biography, the second half of the book is a collection of her poems that view nature and childhood with gentle kindness and empathy. These poems are in English and Japanese. Hajiri’s watercolor illustrations convey a child’s wonder captured so beautifully in Kaneko’s poetry.

**LATHAM, Irene.** *Fresh Delicious: Poems from the Farmers’ Market.* illus. by Mique Moriuchi. WordSong. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 9781629791036.

Cucumbers become submarines and summer squash become punctuation marks as the poet and illustrator take readers through a visit to the local farmers’ market. Children will enjoy this memorable encounter with healthy foods, and in the last poem, the poet remembers to thank the farmers and the earth. The book ends with child-friendly recipes to make the bounty of the market even more “fresh and delicious.”

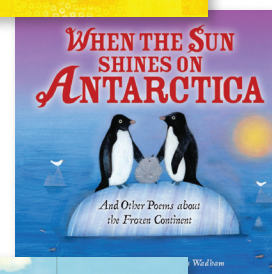
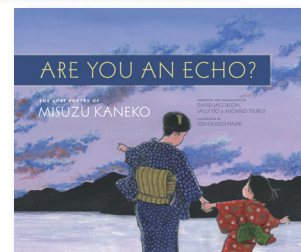
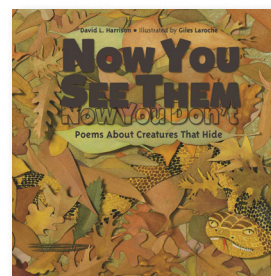
**LATHAM, Irene.** *When the Sun Shines on Antarctica: And Other Poems about the Frozen Continent.* illus. by Anna Wadham. Millbrook. Tr \$19.99. ISBN 9781467752169.

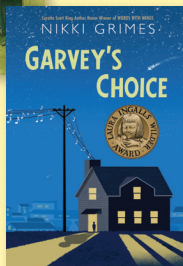
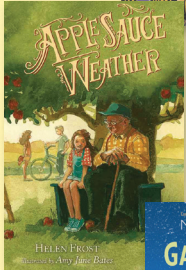
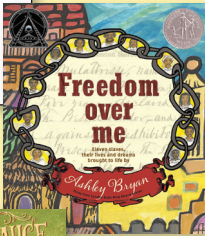
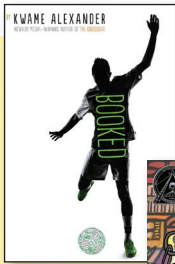
Watch summer unfold as the Antarctic ecosystems come to life as this frozen world begins a slight thaw. Fifteen poems observe plants, animals, and frozen landscapes change into new forms for the new season. Scientifically accurate descriptions and sidebar facts accompany the spreads. Watch as penguins and seals and petrels and more penguins and more seals romp through the snow and ice and even see a little green in the hair grass and moss.

**LEA, Synne.** *Night Guard.* illus. by Stian Hole. Eerdmans. Tr \$17. ISBN 9780802854582. I’m afraid. Will you share my fears? Will I be less afraid if I share with you? This is what Lea explores in this stunning collection of poems about how sharing his fears draws him closer to his family and friends. Hole’s surreal photorealistic illustrations add depth and mystery to this beautiful book. A collection for all ages.

**NESBITT, Ken, ed.** *One Minute till Bedtime: 60-Second Poems to Send You Off to Sleep.* illus. by Christoph Niemann. Little, Brown. Tr \$19.99. ISBN 9780316341219.

Snuggle under the covers before bedtime with a poem from this eclectic collection. Poets including Margarita Engle, J. Patrick Lewis, Joyce Sidman, Jack Prelutsky, Mary Ann Hoberman, and many more, fill the pages with numerous types and styles of poetry. Simple line drawings from Christoph Niemann complement each poem, filling readers’ heads with pleasant thoughts and images before drifting off to sleep.





## 2017 NOTABLE VERSE NOVELS

ALEXANDER, Kwame. *Booked*. HMH. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 9780544570986.

BRYAN, Ashley. *Freedom Over Me*. illus. by Ashley Bryan. Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Bks. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 9781481456906.

FROST, Helen. *Applesauce Weather*. illus. by Amy June Bates. Candlewick. Tr \$14.99. ISBN 9780763675769.

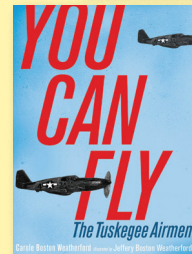
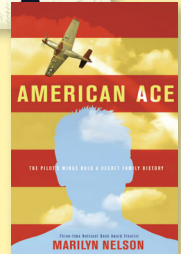
GRIMES, Nikki. *Garvey's Choice*. Wordsong. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 9781629797403.

HARRINGTON, Janice. *Catching a Storyfish*. Wordsong. Tr \$17.95. ISBN 9781629794297.

NELSON, Marilyn. *American Ace*. Dial. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 9780803733053.

SHOVAN, Laura. *The Last Fifth Grade of Emerson Elementary*. Random/Wendy Lamb Bks. Tr \$18.99. ISBN 9780553521382.

WEATHERFORD, Carole Boston. *You Can Fly: The Tuskegee Airmen*. illus. by Jerry Boston Weatherford. S. & S./Atheneum. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 9781481449380.



ORGILL, Roxane. *Jazz Day: The Making of a Famous Photograph*. illus. by Francis Vallejo. Candlewick. Tr \$18.99. ISBN 9780763669546.

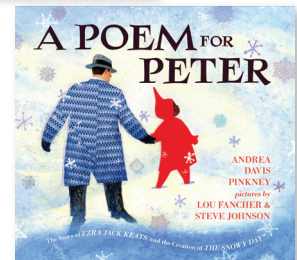
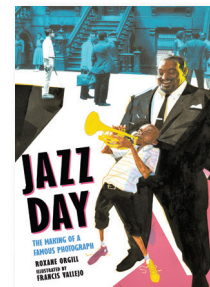
This book tells the story of a famous photograph titled "Harlem, 1955" which memorialized 57 jazz musicians, including Dizzy Gillespie and Duke Ellington. A combination of biography and poetry, the book captures moments from the day the picture was taken; the poetry features a range of perspectives and styles. The photograph itself is reproduced as a gatefold and serves as the climax of the book, leading into the plentiful back matter.

PINKNEY, Andrea Davis. *A Poem for Peter: The Story of Ezra Jack Keats and the Creation of The Snowy Day*. illus. by Lou Fancher & Steve Johnson. Viking. Tr \$18.99. ISBN 9780425287682.

Andrea Davis Pinkney, together with the beautiful illustrations of Lou Fancher and Steve Johnson, offers a poetic homage or tapestry narrative to the life and vision of Ezra Jack Keats, nee Jacob (Jack) Ezra Katz. Growing up in New York with his family who escaped Jewish persecution in their Polish homeland, Ezra's artistic talent was evident from the time he was a small child. He was encouraged by his parents though the early years of their immigration. Then came the Great Depression, which made it very difficult for the budding young artist. Inspired by photographs of a young black child seen in *Life* magazine, Ezra eventually created the groundbreaking *The Snowy Day*, winner of the 1963 Caldecott Medal.

RACZKA, Bob. *Wet Cement: A Mix of Concrete Poems*. Roaring Brook. Tr. \$17.99. ISBN 9781626722361.

In this book of concrete poetry, Raczka cleverly transforms letters and words into images. On each spread, he begins by manipulating letters to create an image of each poem's title. Next, he bends words into arcs, marches them in diagonal lines, and sprinkles them down the page to represent each poem's topic visually. Rhythm and rhyme add aural appeal. The result is a playful book that begs to be read again and again.





Newbery Honor-winning poet Joyce Sidman answers a young child's wish for a snow-filled morning, invoking wintry dreams with her spare verse: "Let the air turn to feathers/the earth turn to sugar/and all that is heavy/turn light." The signature scratchboard and watercolor art of Caldecott medalist Beth Krommes portrays the tranquility of the unexpected snowfall. *Before Morning* offers readers a perfect way to celebrate the first snow of winter.

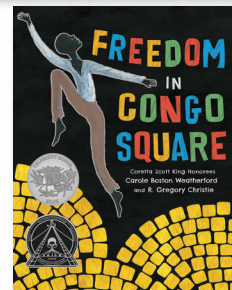
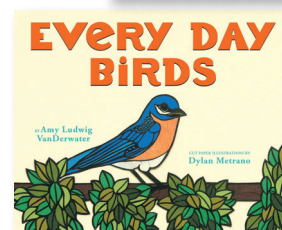
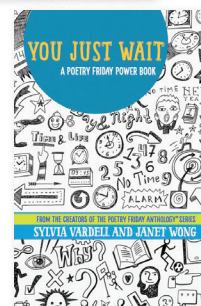
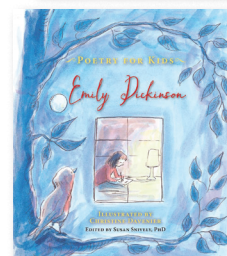
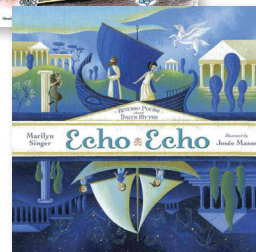
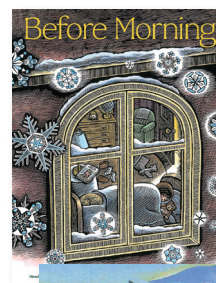
This is the third book in the *reverso* poetry series. Marilyn Singer invented the poetry form, which allows poem pairs to tell the same story from two different points of view. Josée Masse's illustrations in acrylic paint further express the contrasting perspectives of the poems. Singer includes a few facts about the subjects featured in each poem. The book includes an endnote about Greek civilization and information about the *reverso*.

This lovely introduction to Emily Dickinson presents 35 poems written as she observed the world from her home in Amherst, MA. Arranged by season, each poem is accompanied by a lovely watercolor that evokes its spirit. Based on the close observation of the birds, insects, and flowers encountered in her garden and her yard, the poet examines not only the rhythms of nature, but also their parallels to the human and spiritual world.

These two poetry wizards have added another essential book to their “Poetry Friday” collection. This is a classroom- and student-friendly collection of a dozen “Power Packs” in which students do a writing warm-up, read a mentor text from a variety of poets, and read a response poem by Wong. Then they are invited to write their own response. This delightful collection, adaptable to many grade levels, makes both reading and writing poetry personal and accessible to even the most resistant. The book also has a plethora of lists that will prove essential to both young poets and experienced teachers.

Poetry and information are often polar opposites—the first famous for its complications, the second clear and direct. That's why VanDerwater's *Every Day Birds* is such a treat—it delivers on both fronts. Twenty different birds are offered up in effortless, graceful rhymes (“Chickadee wears a wee black cap./Jay is loud and bold./Nuthatch perches upside down./Finch is clothed in gold...”). Simple, beautiful, and useful, the book contains additional facts in the back pages.

With colorful collage-style illustrations and simple rhyming text, this book shares the tradition of enslaved people coming together on Sundays in Congo Square in New Orleans, LA. While the tone and illustrations are upbeat, the book does not sugarcoat the reality of slavery. Source material includes a foreword from a historian and an author's note with further information.



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