The United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY) marks a distinctive era with the announcement of this 10th Outstanding International Books list. For a decade, USBBY has been recommending international books, or books published in countries other than the United States prior to publication or distribution in the U.S., from an expansive and flourishing world of authors, illustrators, and ideas. The 2015 list heralds 42 books, from pre-K to grade 12. Since the first list in 2006, a total of 396 titles have been recognized from among the approximately 3,000 books submitted by publishers during the 10-year span. While the current committee assiduously assigned appropriate grade levels to the books on the 2015 list, we invite librarians to consider using these books in critical and creative ways with multiple age groups of readers. We hope you will alert readers to the international origins of the books in order to promote alternate ways of thinking about content. Ultimately, we hope that by highlighting outstanding international literature, readers will demand more of it, and additional countries and areas of the world can be represented on future lists.

To see the previous lists and read more about the honor list of international books for young people, please go to www.usbb.org/list_oibl.html, where you can also access School Library Journal articles annotating the lists.

Image from Célia by Christelle Vallat, illustrated by Stéphanie Augusseau. First published in Belgium under the title Zélée by Alice Éditions. First U.S. edition is published by Peter Pauper Press.

Seven-year-old Arto insists on wearing his winter clothing when he moves from the wonderfully cold North to the sweltering Southwest, as his way of challenging the move. Cool and warm colors in the mixed-media illustrations evoke the cold and hot environments.


In this wordless story, the compassion a little boy extends to a fox and her newborn kits is returned in kind. Subdued blue tones depict a cold and weary night, contrasted by a hopeful feeling in the morning light.


A poignant tale about conservation is told through the eyes of a homeless girl and what she learns about growth—for herself and the world around her. Hope is conveyed through text, as well as illustrations depicting a drab urban environment that is invigorated by green growth.


A picture book filled with metaphorical spaces, soft and calming illustrations, and spare text depicts a solitary lion who discovers a hurt bird unable to migrate with his companions. Lion helps the bird mend throughout winter, but changes in their friendship occur once spring arrives.


A quartet of shadowy figures attempts to catch a bright bird, with comical results—if only they would listen to the lone, quiet voice of reason among them. Haughton’s illustrations composed of blocky and irregular shapes remind readers that aggression begets darkness while freedom perpetuates light.


An Inuit mother’s concepts for welcoming a new baby are expressed in poetic text. Arctic animals are delicately portrayed, along with messages of the gifts they impart to little Kulu. The author is an Inuit throat singer.


In this chapter book for young readers and continuation of My Happy Life (Gecko, 2014), Dani misses her friend Ella, who has moved away, and during a lunchroom incident she squirts sauce on her two enemies. Line drawings add charm and characterization.


Celia takes the seeds of troubles of all who come to see her and turns them into balloons, cookies, cupcakes, and apples, until one day a young boy loses his seed and thus remains unhappy. Colors against textured shades of gray accentuate Celia’s transformation of the troubles.

Eleven verbs (“hoping,” “expecting,” “cherishing”) are paired with 11 dazzling illustrations of adult birds with their chicks, exemplifying the parallel journeys of parenthood and childhood and culminating in a 12th illustration with two words: “letting go.”


In this picture book, Norman, a shelter dog, wags his tail in a “hula dance of happiness,” but it is clear to his new family that he isn’t very smart, since he doesn’t respond to doggy things. That is, until the day his family realizes that Norman understands Chinese.


The Wall separates a father from the rest of his family members, who remain trapped in East Berlin. The young son is determined to reunite the family where life is rumored to be better. Powerful illustrations complement the text in showing how families are affected by political decisions.


Small drawings of people, dogs, the ship, equipment, and other details add to the narrative, while emphasizing the vastness of the unknown in this introduction to the amazing and true story of Ernest Shackleton’s Antarctic explorations. Readers are invited to learn more about the Age of Exploration.


Anna’s father helps her ponder many questions while they are preparing to go to the funeral for Anna’s mother. Hole’s unique collage and photoshopped illustrations (including the end papers) reflect emotional aspects of death and grieving.


In this picture book version of *A Stranger at Home* (sequel to *When I Was Eight*), 10-year-old Margaret returns from boarding school to her Inuit family and finds differing cultural expectations mean that she is unrecognizable as the girl she was before.


A brilliant German mouse determined to escape the terrifying mousetraps that are wiping out legions of other mice builds a flying machine to ferry him to safety in America. The intricate illustrations enhance a sobering allegory of escaping genocide.


Dreamlike images reflect and expand this richly imagined, poetic introduction to Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, and capture the daring and creative life of this aviator and author of *The Little Prince*.


Tom Shepherd leaves his wife, young child, and idyllic life of tending sheep to...
serve in the Great War, and he never returns. This heartbreaking story conveys the tragic reality of war in a way that is accessible to young children.

SCHMIDT, Annie M.G. A Pond Full of Ink. tr. from Dutch by David Colmer. illus. by Sieb Posthuma. Eerdmans. Tr $16.99. ISBN 9780802854339. The Netherlands. Twelve quirky poems offer unique perspectives on the world, such as otters spending the day biking and a child admitting a preference for behaving badly. Imaginative reflection is encouraged, as each poem is illustrated and there are several double-page spreads with illustration only.

SMITH, David J. If...: A Mind-Bending New Way of Looking at Big Ideas and Numbers. illus. by Steve Adams. Kids Can. Tr $18.95. ISBN 9781554535958. Canada. Complex concepts are made comprehensible by using comparisons to familiar objects. For example, all water on earth is compared to 100 glasses; 97 would contain salt water, while three would contain fresh water. The varied content addresses larger concepts such as sustainability, stewardship, and global engagement and understanding.

TAN, Shaun. Rules of Summer. illus. by author. Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine. Tr $18.99. ISBN 978054539598. Canada. Two brothers wander, hide, and explore in a surreal summer playground. While the older boy states the rules, beginning with “Never…,” the younger one proves only too willing to push boundaries. An impressive homage to endless possibilities, the unbreakable bonds of brotherhood, and another celebration of Tan’s signature fantastical creatures.

VAN LEEUWEN, Joke. The Day My Father Became a Bush. tr. from Dutch by Bill Nagelkerke. illus. by author. Gecko. Tr $16.95. ISBN 9781877579486. The Netherlands. With the war getting closer, Toda’s father becomes a soldier and dresses in camouflage to look like a bush. There is no fighting across the border where Toda’s mother lives, and Gran arranges a journey for Toda to find her. Line drawings enhance this chapter book.

GRADERS 6–8


BASSOFF, Leah & Laura DeLuca. Lost Girl Found. Groundwood/House of Anansi. Tr $16.95. ISBN 9781554984169; ebk. $14.95. ISBN 9781554984183. Canada. Education spells hope for Poni, a smart, resilient Sudanese girl, but her dreams are crushed after violence strikes her village. She flees to a refugee camp in Kakuma, Kenya, and her desire for a better life prompts her to seize the one chance she has for a brighter future.

the effects of war on soldiers and civilians highlights the reactions to early pacifists and conscientious objectors.

DAS, Amrita. *Hope Is a Girl Selling Fruit*. tr. from Hindi by Gita Wolf & Susheela Varadarajan. illus. by author. Tara. Tr $16.95. ISBN 9789383145027. India. Recalling a childhood memory of a train journey when she saw a girl who owned her own cart for selling fruit, Das uses the Mithila style of Indian folk art to relate her discovery of the possibilities for personal and financial freedom for poor girls in India.

MATEO, José Manuel. *Migrant: The Journey of a Mexican Worker*. tr. from Spanish by Emmy Smith Ready. illus. by Javier Martínez Pedro. Abrams. Tr $17.95. ISBN 9781419709579. Mexico. Inspired by the ancient Mesoamerican codex format, this bilingual and astonishing piece of art masquerading as a book literally unfolds to depict a Mexican family’s dangerous immigration journey. The tiny figures populating the document starkly contrast with the enormous challenges of survival, border crossing, and hopeful reunion in an unwelcoming new country.

PRINS, Marcel & Peter Henk Steenhuis. *Hidden Like Anne Frank: Fourteen True Stories of Survival*. tr. from Dutch by Laura Watkinson. Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine. Tr $16.99. ISBN 9780545543620; The Netherlands. In their own voices, elderly Jewish men and women describe their lives in the Netherlands before, during, and after the war and how they posed as Christians, crawled into hiding spaces, or otherwise were secreted away. Photos of the survivors as children and now are included.

RAMSTEIN, Anne-Margot & Matthias Arégui. *Before After*. illus. by authors. Candlewick. Tr $19.99. ISBN 9780763676216. UK. Illustrations on the verso and recto of each opening can be connected to create “before” and “after” sequences. For example, an illustration of a slingshot precedes an image of a broken window. Instances of humor and surprise that people of all ages can appreciate appear in this wordless concept book.

SHYAM, Bhajju with Gita Wolf & Sirish Rao. *The London Jungle Book*. illus. by author. Tara. Tr $19.95. ISBN 9788192317120. India. Indian tribal artist Shyam explains his cultural perceptions from a trip to London when he was invited to paint murals in an Indian restaurant. The book is illustrated with Shyam’s detailed and patterned Gond painting style, and several images have brief explanations.
The Outstanding International Books (OIB) list has been an annual list since 2006. Books are selected by a committee appointed from the membership of USBBY, the United States section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY). Over 380 books published or released in the United States in 2014 were examined in the compilation of the 2015 list, representing exceptional literature from France, the United Kingdom, Canada, Norway, Italy, New Zealand, Mexico, India, Australia, Great Britain, The Netherlands, Belgium, and Sweden.

The list promotes the best of children's literature from other countries, introduces young people to outstanding authors and illustrators from other countries, and helps children and young people in the U.S. to see the world from other points of view. The list also promotes literature that is accessible to children and young people in the U.S., provides or addresses topics that may be missing from children's and young adult literature in the U.S., and promotes books that may exhibit distinct cultural flavor. For additional information and to access all OIB lists, please visit www.usbby.org.

**Members of the 2015 USBBY Outstanding International Books Committee:**

- Brenda Dales (Chair), Oxford, OH; Laretta Henderson, Brown Deer, WI; Terry Hong, Park City, UT; Holly Johnson, Cincinnati, OH; Mona Kerby, Westminster, MD; Ed Sullivan, Oak Ridge, TN; Barbara Ward, Pullman, WA; Bobbie Xuereb, San Diego, CA; Terrell Young, Provo, UT.