



NCTE NOTABLE CHILDREN'S POETRY BOOKS AND VERSE NOVELS LIST

Each year, the Children's Poetry Awards Committee produces the Notable Children's Poetry Books and Verse Novels list for students ages three to fourteen (preK–grade 8) by authors of the most outstanding contributions to poetry books and verse novels for children.

2026 Notable Children's Poetry Books

- *The History of We* by Nikkolas Smith (Kokila Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House)
- *Rap It Up!* by Carole Boston Weatherford and Jeffery Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Ernel Martinez (Henry Holt and Co. (BYR), an imprint of Macmillan)
- *A Universe of Rainbows: Multicolored Poems for a Multicolored World* by Matt Forrest Esenwine, illustrated by Jamey Christoph (Eerdmans Books for Young Readers)
- *Black Diamond Kings: Heroes of Negro League Baseball (Sports Royalty)* by Charles R. Smith Jr., illustrated by Adrian Brandon (Candlewick Press)
- *The Pine Cone's Secret: A Life Cycle Poem* by Hannah Barnaby, illustrated by Cédric Abt (Source Books Explore)
- *A Forest Song* by Kirsten Hall, illustrated by Evan Turk (Random House Studio, an imprint of Penguin Random House)
- *Harriet Tubman, Force of Nature: A Biography in Poems* by Caroline Brewer (What on Earth!)
- *"Dear Acorn (Love, Oak): Letter Poems to Friends* by Joyce Sidman, illustrated by Melissa Sweet (Clarion Books)
- *Cows and Sheep and Chicks that Cheep: Farm Poems* by Douglas Florian (Beach Lane Books)
- *Awesome Earth: Concrete Poems Celebrate Caves, Canyons, and Other Fascinating Landforms* by Joan Bransfield Graham, illustrated by Tania Garcia (Clarion Books)

2026 Notable Verse Novels

- *A Sea of Lemon Tress: The Corrido of Roberto Alvarez* by María Dolores Águila (Roaring Brook Press, an imprint of Macmillan)
- *Green Promises: Girls Who Loved the Earth* by Jeannine Atkins (Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster)
- *The Trouble with Heroes* by Kate Messner (Bloomsbury Children's Books)
- *The Burning Season* by Caroline Starr Rose (Nancy Paulsen Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House)
- *The Poetry of Car Mechanics* by Heidi E.Y. Stemple (Wordsong, an imprint of Astra Publishing House)
- *Radiant* by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson (Dutton Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Penguin Random House)

2026 NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children Committee Members:

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Willeena Booker, Hatboro-Horsham School District, Horsham, PA

Darryn Diuguid, McKendree University, Lebanon, IL

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Kasey Short, Charlotte Country Day School, Charlotte, NC

April Halprin Wayland, Author, Instructor at UCLA Extension Writers' Program, Los Angeles, CA

Jongsun Wee, Pacific University,

Forest Grove, OR



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