

Summer Reading 2022
Oceans of Possibilities
Children's and YA Literature
Wellfleet Public Library

All selections and annotations by WPL Librarian Anna L. Nielsen

Poetry

Ak'abal, Humberto; illus. Amelia Lau Carling; trans. Spanish Hugh Hazelton. *Here Was Paradise: Selected Poems/ Aquí era paraíso: Selección de poemas*. Toronto/Berkeley: House of Anansi Press, Groundwood Books, 2021. Ak'abal was a Guatemalen poet, from the Maya K'iche village of Momostenango. He is known as one of the greatest Indigenous poets of the Americas; he wrote first in K'iche, translated his work into Spanish, and are available here in Spanish and English. The poems are of birds singing and water of first downpours and lasting rains; mornings in the village where we can "feel the taste/ the simplicity of its grandeur" and evenings looking at the moon and watching grandmothers "lighting up the silence," all mapping the Indigenous experience. His words are minimal and slowly paced, and the illustrations that mark each section of poems are mixed media that manage to convey a sense of home, in the hills and woodlands that surround the village. Quiet beauty prevails everywhere, with some ache, and it isn't until the penultimate poem, "500 Years", that he blatantly speaks his resistance to colonial reign. He writes, "It's not that we Indigenous people/ are old;/ it's the weight of poverty,/ of indifference,/ of injustice,/ that makes us age./ And this goes back/ a little farther than/ 500 years." **Ages: 8+.**

Hagen, Hans & Monique; illus. Marit Tornqvist; trans. Dutch David Colmer. *You Are the Loveliest*. NY: Levine Querido, Chronicle Books, LLC, 2022. "I need a word/ a brand-new word/ a word that no one knows/ like loviest wonderflest-sweetissimost/ but bigger than all those." So begins this joyous celebration of love and life and all the things that make us feel all the good and exciting feelings. "My new shoes/are so big/ they'll carry this girl/ all over the world." Yes! It's Molly Bloom for the younger set without any trauma or drama. It's joy, and excitement, and pure pleasure in being alive, even if sometimes we feel what sad is. The illustrations are full and bursting with color - made from gouache, acrylic paint, charcoal, ink, watercolors, pastels - any means the illustrator could think of to ensure every bit of paper has every bit of depth and texture joy and life and love. Perfect for all ages to read and share. **Ages: 4+.**

Kooser, Ted and Connie Wanek; illus. Richard Jones. *Marshmallow Clouds: Two Poets at Play among Figures of Speech*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2022. Kooser is a US Poet Laureate who won a Pulitzer Prize and Wanek is no slouch, winner of a New Voices Award. Jones is an experienced illustrator of children's poetry and picture books, always dependable for a splash of color and pattern in all the right places. *Marshmallow Clouds* is a volume devoted to imagination, and to the idea of playing with our imaginations, regularly, to keep them in shape. Are clouds cobwebs of the sky, or are marshmallows cloudy? Who can say for sure? Pure pleasure. **Ages: 4+.**

Neruda, Pablo; illus. Paloma Valdiva; trans. Spanish Sara Lissa Paulson. *Book of Questions: Selections/Libro de las Preguntas: Selecciones*. Brooklyn, NY: Enchanted Lion Books, 2022. Without a doubt, one of the most beautiful books of the year. Neruda won the Nobel Prize in Literature for poetry in 1971, and these poem questions tell us why. The fold-out pages with Valdiva's illustrations force us to linger with his questions and weigh a multitude of possibilities. "And what did the rubies say,/ faced with the juice of the pomegranate? And do you know which is more difficult, / to sprout or to reap?" Make it your family book of the season, and keep it close year-round. Beautiful can always be read again. **Ages: 4+.**

Tellegen, Toon; illus. Ingrid Godon; trans. Dutch David Colmer. *I Wish*. Brooklyn, NY: Elsewhere Editions, 2020. “Despairers will be prosecuted.” So begins Tellegen’s poem series of children wishing. Not the kind of wishes that come in threes, or the kind in which you wish your mother understood you and so you end up in a freaky Friday switch with her – the kind in which each child is thinking, really thinking, about this thing called life. “Despairers will be prosecuted,” wishes a child, terrified that “nothing would ever come right between me and everyone else.” Susanne wishes she wasn’t scared dying, but “maybe everyone needs to be scared of something.” Other children want blushing to go away, that they will be loved, that they will have alibis, forever and ever, no matter what. Still others that they will be able to say, when the moment matters, “That, I will not do.” Godon’s drawings emphasize the ordinary over the exceptional, and each wish feels even more the strength of the practice of every day life. Resonant and profound, to be enjoyed together or alone, over and over. Highly recommended. **Ages: 10+.**

Nonfiction

Bernasconi, Pablo. *Infinity*. Oklahoma City & Greensboro: Penny Candy Books, 2021. A contemplation of infinity. The illustrations are a sort of cross between Pamela Zagarenski and Shaun Tan, marrying the whimsical with the somewhat weird, all in support of the arching questions: What is infinity? The epigraph is from William Shakespeare: “I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space,” and off a tilted king goes across the recto, carrying a carrot and a skull, balancing every so precariously on a walnut. Whimsical and really somewhat weird and absolutely original. Look out for the sheep rowing off a cliff. **Ages: 8+.**

Blumenthal, Karen. *Jane Against the World: Roe v. Wade and the Fight for Reproductive Rights*. NY: Roaring Brook Press, 2020. A fact-based history of the abortion argument that’s been all over the news in 2022. It tracks the changes in laws, the convictions of opposing sides, how it’s been used as a political tool, and how the United States is so unusual among so-called first world nations for still even considering it an issue. A glossary of terms, a timeline, a list of significant Supreme Court cases on abortion and reproductive rights, and bibliography included. **Ages: 14+.** For more information, also try *My Body My Choice: The Fight for Abortion Rights* (Robin Stevenson, Orca Books Publishers, 2019), part of the Orca Issues: Critical Insights into Hot-button Issues series.

Camnitzer, Luis. *The Volume*. NY: Gregory R. Miller & Co., 2021. A conceptual book about what it means to think and think critically and curiously and to write and make art. It starts with the Big Bang, but it isn’t about exploding – it’s about getting started. The illustrations are jagged squiggles that sink into dots that spread to lines across page boundaries that morph into numbers that are next to each other and touch each other and talk about possibilities. Delightful and addictive. **Ages: 8+.**

Carson, Rachel. *The Sea Around Us*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1951. It won the National Book Award in nonfiction and the Burroughs Medal in nature writing in 1952. It was on the NYT Bestseller list for 86 weeks. It was translated into 28 languages and counting. It was written by Rachel Carson, the woman marine biologist who later went even further and gave us *Silent Spring* (1962). Love the natural marine environment? Carson is the best place to start. An absolutely recommended read. **Ages: 13+.**

Garcia Esperon, Maria; illus. Amanda Mijangos; trans. David Bowles. *The Sea-Ringed World: Sacred Stories of the Americas*. NY: Levine Querido, 2021. Mexican poet Garcia Esperon retells

eighteen indigenous tales in this resplendent book, from the northern tip of North America to the southern tip of South America. Creation tales, cautionary tales, they're all here. The Aztecs called home the Sea-Ringed world, and each ring had more life than the next. **Ages: 6+.**

Hawkins, Emily; illus. Lucy Letherland. *Atlas of Ocean Adventures*. Beverly, MA: Wide Eyed Editions, The Quarto Group, 2019. An oversized, illustrated compendium of the sea. Interested in sharks? Check out the Great Whites on Seal Island, off the coast of South Africa or the Hammerheads around Cocos Island southwest of Costa Rica in the Pacific Ocean. A super convenient index helps guide you directly to your favorite animals, or you can browse to your heart's content. **Ages: 8+.**

Hirsch, Rebecca E. *Where Have All the Birds Gone? Nature in Crisis* series. Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-First Century Books, Lerner Publishing Group, Inc., 2022. Bird populations are plummeting across the planet, and this book examines why, as well as the necessary roles birds play in maintaining healthy ecosystems and food systems, and what we can do about it to save the birds and thus the planet Earth and our own lives. An entire chapter is devoted to sea change (appropriately begun with the Arthur C. Clarke quote, "How inappropriate to call this planet Earth when it is clearly Ocean"). Glossary and bibliography included; photographs throughout. **Ages: 12+.**

Koch, Melissa. *Forest Talk: How Trees Communicate*. Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-First Century Books, Lerner Publishing Group, Inc., 2019. An introduction to trees, how they live (and talk to each other), how we humans depend on them (for, well, everything,), and what we can do to save tree populations from disappearing through human destruction. Everything is connected. The communication part explains how trees communicate belowground through a combination of fungi and roots called a mycorrhizal network. So very cool. Glossary, bibliography, and supporting photographs included. **Ages: 12+.** For a narrative nonfiction introduction for the preschool and kindergarten set, try *Listen to the Language of Trees* (Tera Kelley; illus. Marie Hermansson, Naperville, IL: Dawn Publications, 2022). For teenagers and grownups, be sure to sink into Peter Wohlleben's *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, Ltd., 2016).

Leeney, Ruth H.; illus. Alexis Aronson. *All About Sawfishes. Protect Africa's Sawfishes*, 2021. Marine Biologist, Dr. Leeney, who spent three years locally as Director of the Right Whale Aerial Survey Program at the Center for Coastal Studies in Provincetown, Cape Cod, since 2012 is the founder and director of Protect Africa's Sawfishes, an organization devoted to the study and protection of sawfishes. *All About Sawfishes* is the first comprehensive guide to the five species of sawfishes for younger readers. Clearly and informatively written, it is an invaluable resource, providing details of sawfishes, where they live, and the important part they play in our ecosystem. A stellar book, highly recommended. **Ages: 7+.**

Lilley, Matt; illus. Dan Tavis. *Good Eating: The Short Life of Krill*. Thomaston, ME: Tilbury House Publishers, 2022. It's about time someone wrote a book for young readers all about krill, and here it is, thanks to Lilley and Tavis. Krill are considered a keystone species of ocean life because they eat phytoplankton and serve as tasty treats (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) for other animals like blue whales. Amazing and useful little creatures. Filled with facts and fun, informative illustrations. Krill are very cool. **Ages: 5+.**

Ortega, Rena; trans. Spanish Paula Meiss. *The Secret Life of Whales*. NY: Thames & Hudson Inc., 2021. Originally published by Mosquito Books out of Barcelona, this stunningly illustrated

book provides information of specific whales, their behaviors, how they sleep (did you know sperm whales sleep in groups, floating upright in the water?), how they dive, how they eat, how they sing – oh, the list goes on. Each whale is meticulously illustrated in shades of blue and white and black, with personality and detail. So lovely. **Ages: 8+.**

Poliquin, Rachel; illus. Byron Eggenschwiler. *The Strangest Thing in the Sea: And Other Curious Creatures of the Deep*. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2021. This book about creatures of the sea is based on an unusual two-part premise. First, the sea animal is presented in an illustration reminiscent of something else, with the query, “Am I the strangest thing in the sea?” on the verso. Second, the recto page fold out to become a double-page, revealing a full illustration of what the animal actually looks like, along with facts about the animal. Thus something that looks like a silvery moon becomes an ocean sunfish and a tiptoeing rock wearing a wig becomes a hairy frogfish. Some combinations require less imagination than others to figure, but the wondering makes for good reading. Glossary provided. **Ages: 8+.**

Rothery, Ben. *Ocean Planet: Animals of the Sea and Shore*. Thomaston, ME: Tilbury House Publishers, 2021. This oversize book is gorgeously illustrated, filled with larger-than-life drawings of animals who live in and around the seas across the globe. A section on the ocean itself is included, describing climate zones and ocean habitats. A Whale Shark takes an entire verso and recto spread, and we learn why: they are the biggest fish in the sea, growing to over 59 feet (in spite of their enormous size, they are mostly harmless to most creatures, other than the plankton and tiny fish on which they feed). The pencil drawings are so meticulous and full of character that readers can't help but feel they know the Pacific walrus intimately and that the West Indian manatee has a truly adorable face. And in the westernmost part of Canada there is a population of coastal wolves that live almost entirely off the sea; one look at Rothery's portrait, and you're in love. **Ages: 8+.**

Schutten, Jan Paul; photo. Arie van't Riet; trans. Dutch Laura Watkinson. *Inside In: X-Rays of Nature's Hidden World*. Berkeley, CA: Greystone Kids, 2022. X-ray photographs of animals, from arthropods and mollusks to mammals like hedgehogs and foxes. The details is exquisite, and some photos are touched up with lightly colored illustrations for contrast. Each photo is accompanied by explanatory, informative text. Did you know dragonflies have been around over 300 million years? And that in addition to their wings, they have six legs? So interesting! **Ages: 7+.** And if the sight of all those bones set your curiosity twitching, try ***Bones: An Inside Look at the Animal Kingdom* (Jules Howard, illus. Chervelle Fryer; Somerville, MA: Big Picture Press, Candlewick Press, 2020).**

Trinick, Loveday; illus. Teagan White. *Oceanarium*. Somerville, MA: Big Picture Press, Candlewick Press, 2022. This oversize marvel is part of the *Welcome to the Museum: Admit All* series, and what a grand and wondrous contribution it is: over two hundred creatures of the sea, exactly illustrated and deftly defined, from the epipelagic to abyssopelagic layers. The ocean. The best. **Ages: 8+.**