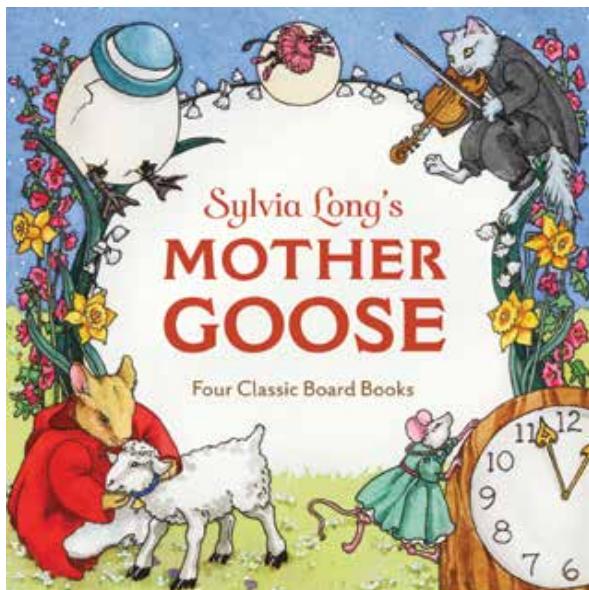


The Reading Chair

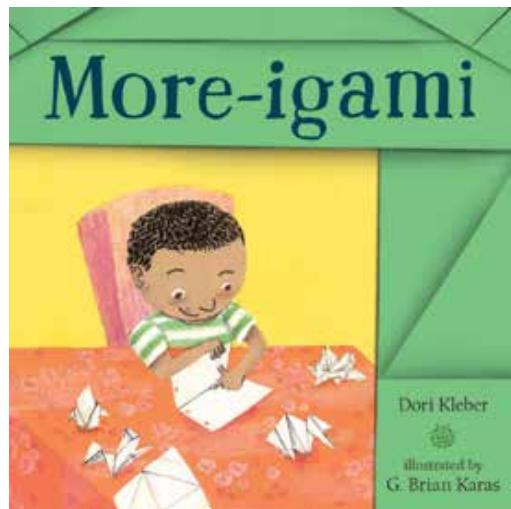
New children's books too good to miss and one forever favorite



Sylvia Long's Mother Goose: Four Classic Board Books

Illus. by Sylvia Long. 2016. San Francisco: Chronicle. Four books, each 12 pp. Ages birth to 3.

Children are drawn to rhyme from infancy, and every child deserves the rhymes of Mother Goose. Here, they are packaged in four small chunky board books—fun for babies and toddlers to hold. Learning artful language and rhyme at a young age is associated with better literacy outcomes in elementary school. With one nursery rhyme per book, this set is a wonderful way to help little ones become familiar with these popular rhymes and join our common literary culture.



More-igami

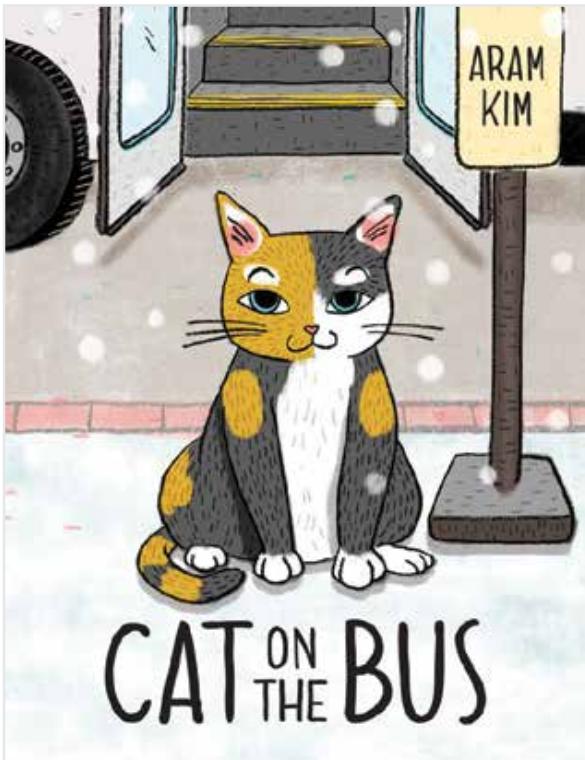
by Dori Kleber. Illus. by G. Brian Karas. 2016. Somerville, MA: Candlewick. 40 pp. Ages 3 to 7.

Joey loves to fold things—his napkin, old road maps, and his foldaway bed. When a classmate's mother comes in to demonstrate origami, his world expands exponentially. She tells him that becoming an origami master requires practice and patience. Joey gets to work. But folding everything in sight—like his sister's sheet music and his mother's recipe—annoys those around him. With patience, he finds a way to practice his craft while being helpful to a neighbor. This multicultural story features Joey, who is African American, his Japanese classmate and her mother, and his Mexican neighbor. Instructions at the back teach readers to make origami ladybugs. This story ties together themes of skill development, community, diversity, and good character. Classroom extension activities abound. The gouache and pencil illustrations colorfully and playfully capture the story.

About the authors

Isabel Baker, MAT, MLS, is president of The Book Vine for Children, a national company dedicated to getting good books into the hands of preschool children and their teachers. Isabel has worked as a children's librarian and is currently a presenter on early literacy and book selection.

Miriam Baker Schiffer, MFA, is a writer in Brooklyn, New York. She consults on book selections for The Book Vine, in McHenry, Illinois. Miriam's children's book, *Stella Brings the Family*, was published by Chronicle Books in 2015.

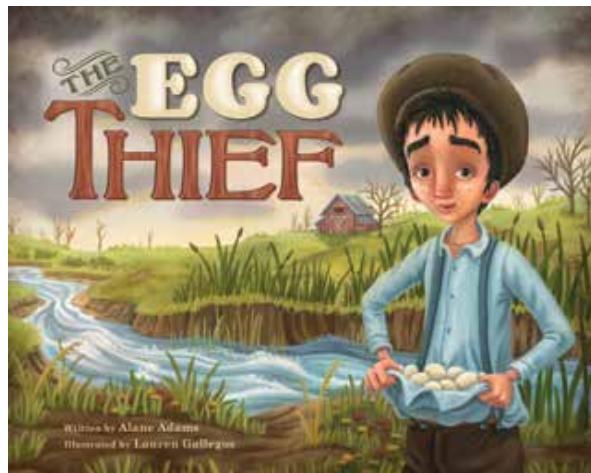


Cat on the Bus

by Aram Kim. 2016. New York: Holiday House. 36 pp. Ages 3 to 7.

Wordless books can be intimidating at first glance, because the “reader” isn’t quite sure what to say. But they tend to become beloved for how they engage children and draw out their creative storytelling. Children love knowing that their opinions count!

This beautiful wordless book is filled with tension that will get children talking. It begins with a stray cat whose requests for help are rejected. Taking a risk, the cat makes a human friend. Then, with only a few clues, the reader is left to wonder what has happened to them—until suddenly a happy ending appears. The cat’s face and body language express a range of complicated feelings, which can help children learn to recognize and talk about emotions. With illustrations created with pastels and colored pencils, cast in rich hues, readers will feel as cozy as the cat does when it settles into a new home.



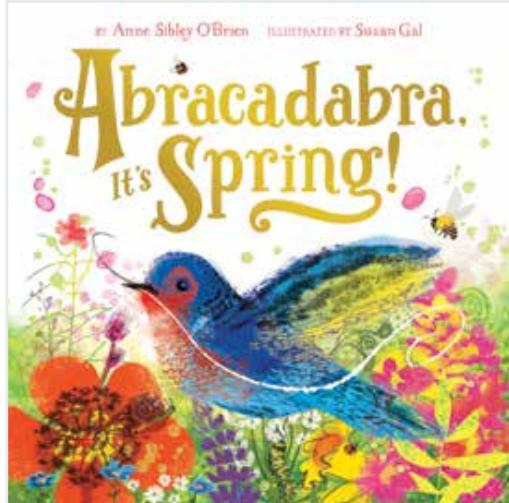
The Egg Thief

by Alane Adams. Illus. by Lauren Gallegos. 2016. Tempe, AZ: SparkPress. 32 pp. Ages 4 to 8.

Even though this tale is set on a farm 100 years ago, this story’s themes are so relatable that young readers will feel an immediate connection to the young main character. While doing his morning chores, Georgie notices that all the eggs are gone! Turns out, a stray dog helped himself to breakfast. Georgie is captivated by the adorable pup, whom he names Buster; but what about the eggs? Georgie and Buster have to make the situation right!

Buster eventually takes Georgie to the neighbor’s hen house, where there are plenty of eggs. Georgie knows it wouldn’t be right to steal, but Buster has already run ahead. Luckily, the neighbor arrives. “Have you come to help me collect my eggs?” she asks. She tells him he can keep half of the pickings and suggests that he help her fix her coop sometime.

The illustrations are painterly and charming, with expression and warmth. This book covers so much of the human condition, from desire to laziness, and from fear to love. There is plenty for children to discuss.



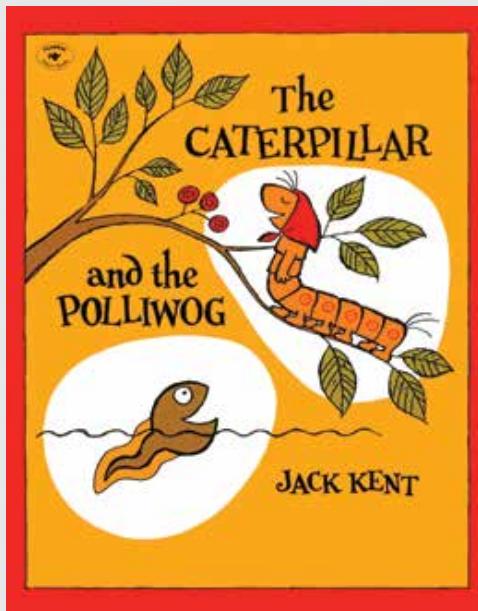
Abracadabra, It's Spring!

by Anne Sibley O'Brien. Illus. by Susan Gal. 2016. New York: Abrams. 24 pp. Ages 3 to 7.

For those of us living in colder climates, spring really *is* like magic. Celebrate that magic in this lush fold-out book in which Mother Nature's bounty spreads across the page as the frost subsides. "Sunshine warms a patch of snow. Hocus-pocus! [page unfolds] ... Where did it go?" Illustrations saturated with color capture the energy and optimism animals have in the changing season. Words like *presto chango* and *alakazam* set a mystical tone, as green shoots spring forth from the ground and birds build new nests. This gorgeous and uplifting read will provide effortless extension activities for classroom walks in March, April, and May.

Forever Favorites

Each month we feature a classic book to (re)introduce teachers to old favorites.



The Caterpillar and the Polliwog

by Jack Kent. 1982. New York: Prentice-Hall. 32 pp. Ages 3 to 8.

This classic story has it all—an exploration of social and emotional issues, a great story, and humor—and it's a perfect STEAM title, to boot! That's why it is still relevant today, 35 years after its first printing. In the story, a boastful caterpillar leaves a polliwog thinking that he, too, will become a butterfly, when in fact the polliwog's transformation will be somewhat different. Some of us will identify with the boastful caterpillar who wants to show himself off, and others will feel kinship with the frog who is enchanted by the caterpillar. Their behaviors tap into our human inclination to grow and improve. Jack Kent was a cartoonist and graphic artist in addition to being a children's book creator. He paces the story well, and his illustrations contain a hint of cartooning, with energetic yet simple lines.