

# Diversity Booklist

Recommended by the Birmingham Public Library Diversity Committee

## Adult

***Black Elk speaks; being the life story of a holy man of the Oglala Sioux, as told through John G. Neihardt (Flaming Rainbow)***  
**Illustrated by Standing Bear.**

The famous story of the Lakota healer and visionary, Nicholas Black Elk. This is a haunting and moving transcription of interviews with the revered medicine man Black Elk of the Oglala band of the Lakota Sioux in 1930 at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

***The Great Believers* by Rebecca Makkai**

Alternating between present-day Paris and '80s Chicago, *The Great Believers* explores the impact and aftermath of the AIDS epidemic on a close-knit group of friends living in Boystown.

***Jam On the Vine* by LaShonda Katrice Bennett**

An explosive debut novel that chronicles the life of a trailblazing African American woman journalist named Ivoe Williams through the start of the twentieth century. A dynamic tale of triumph against the odds and the compelling story of one woman's struggle for equality.

***Speak No Evil* by Uzodinma Iweala**

A revelation shared between two privileged teenagers from very different backgrounds sets off a chain of events with devastating consequences.

***An Unkindness of Ghosts* by Rivers Solomon**

Aster lives in the low deck slums of the HSS *Matilda*, a space vessel organized much like the antebellum South. For generations, *Matilda* has ferried the last of humanity to a mythical Promised Land. On its way, the ship's leaders have imposed harsh moral restrictions and deep indignities on dark-skinned sharecroppers like Aster. Embroiled in a grudge with a brutal overseer, Aster learns there may be a way to improve her lot -- if she's willing to sow the seeds of civil war.

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## Teen

### ***The 57 Bus* by Dashka Slater**

One teenager in a skirt. One teenager with a lighter. One moment that changes both of their lives forever. If it weren't for the 57 bus, Sasha and Richard never would have met. Each day, their paths overlapped for a mere eight minutes. But one afternoon on the bus ride home from school, a single reckless act left Sasha severely burned, and Richard charged with two hate crimes and facing life imprisonment. The case garnered international attention, thrusting both teenagers into the spotlight.

### ***The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie**

Bestselling author Sherman Alexie tells the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the rez to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.

### ***Gone Crazy in Alabama* by Rita Williams- Garcia**

Rita Williams-Garcia has written a convincing, often humorous portrayal of three young sisters from Brooklyn spending the summer in the South, living and learning in the bosom of a complicated but loving multigenerational family.

### ***I'll Give You the Sun* by Jandy Nelson**

Jude and her brother Noah are twins. Although they were incredibly close at thirteen, three years later they are hardly speaking to each other. The early years are narrated by Noah as he struggles with an enormous secret that affects his past, present, and future. The later years are narrated by Jude and everything changes when she meets an arrogant and broken, yet beautiful boy. Jude also encounters a tormented, mysterious artist—an even more unpredictable force that changes her life, and Noah's, forever.

### ***Little & Lion* by Brandy Colbert**

A stunning novel on love, identity, loss, and redemption, featuring diverse characters grappling with such issues as bipolar illness and bisexuality, from Publishers Weekly Flying Start author Brandy Colbert.

### ***The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline**

Humanity has nearly destroyed its world through global warming, but now an even greater evil lurks. The indigenous people of North America are being hunted and harvested for their bone marrow, which carries the key to recovering something the rest of the population has lost: the ability to dream.

***Monday's Not Coming* by Tiffany Jackson**

In her YA thriller *Monday's Not Coming*, author Tiffany D. Jackson spins a tale of murder, neglect, and systemic racism, all told through the lens of a middle school aged girl.

***Piecing Me Together* by Renee Watson**

Acclaimed author Renee Watson offers a powerful story about a girl striving for success in a world that too often seems like it's trying to break her. Through her art, Jade begins to act on the realization that she needs to make her own opportunities.

***The Stars Beneath Our Feet* by David Barclay Moore**

A boy tries to steer a safe path through the projects in Harlem in the wake of his brother's death in this outstanding debut novel that celebrates community and creativity.

***When I Was the Greatest* by Jason Reynolds**

In *Bed Stuy*, New York, a small misunderstanding can escalate into having a price on your head—even if you're totally clean. This gritty, triumphant debut that Publishers Weekly calls "a funny and rewarding read" captures the heart and the hardship of life for an urban teen.

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## Youth

### ***Better Nate than Ever* by Tim Federle**

An eighth-grader who dreams of performing in a Broadway musical concocts a plan to run away to New York and audition for the role of Elliot in the musical version of "E.T."

### ***Enchanted Air: Two Cultures, Two Wings: A Memoir* by Margarita Engle**

In this poetic memoir, which won the Pura Belpré Author Award, was a YALSA Nonfiction Finalist, and was named a Walter Dean Myers Award Honoree, acclaimed author Margarita Engle tells of growing up as a child of two cultures during the Cold War.

### ***Juana & Lucas, written and illustrated by Juana Medina***

Juana loves many things: drawing, living in Bogotá, Colombia, and especially her dog, Lucas, the best amigo ever. She does not love wearing her itchy school uniform, solving math problems, or learning the English. Why is it so important to learn a language that makes so little sense? Hilarious, energetic, and utterly relatable, Juana will win over los corazones (the hearts) of readers everywhere.

### ***Rescue & Jessica: A Life-Changing Friendship* by Jessica Kensky and Patrick Downes**

Based on a real-life partnership, the heartening story of the love and teamwork between a girl and her service dog will illuminate and inspire.

### ***Thank You, Omu!* by Oge Mora**

Everyone in the neighborhood dreams of a taste of Omu's delicious stew! One by one, they follow their noses toward the scrumptious scent. And one by one, Omu offers a portion of her meal. Soon the pot is empty. Has she been so generous that she has nothing left for herself?

### ***You're welcome, Universe* by Whitney Gardner**

Julia, a deaf Indian teen who is expelled from the Kingston School for the Deaf, finds a slur about her best friend scrawled across the school and covers it up with a graffiti mural to protect her friend's reputation.