

# Eureka! California in Children's Literature

## **Fiction**

Altman, Linda Jacobs. *The Legend of Freedom Hill*.

Lee & Low, 2000. Gr. 1-5

Living in Gold Rush California, Rosabel and Sophie are outsiders and best friends. When Rosabel's mother is captured by a slave hunter, Rosabel is cared for by Sophie's Jewish family. The story tells of the girls' attempts to raise the money to buy the mother's freedom before the slave hunter returns to the South. Told in a dialect that evokes the language of the Gold Rush days, the watercolor illustrations by Cornelius Van Wright and Ving-Hwa Hu help immerse the reader in the ethnic history of the time period. Readers will come to understand the character's love, bravery, and ingenuity 2001 Notable Social Studies Trade Book.

Argueta, Jorge. *Xochitl and the Flowers/Xochitl, la Nina de las Flores*. Illus. by Carl Angel.

Children's Book Press, 2003. Gr. K-4

Xochitl and her family, newly arrived in San Francisco from El Salvador, create a beautiful plant nursery in place of the garbage heap behind their apartment in the Mission District, and celebrate with their friends and neighbors. Joyous color pencil and photo collage illustrations bring the story to life. The side-by-side bilingual text enhances the story of the Central American immigrant experience.

Arkins, Catherine. *When Jeff Comes Home*.

Putnam, 1999. Gr. YA

Sixteen-year-old Jeff is released from his kidnapper after three years, to face the difficulties of reintegrating into the family life in California's Central Valley, as well as the trauma of facing friends, relatives and classmates who ostracize him and manage to make him feel guilty for the sexual abuse he endured. 2000 ALA Best Book for Young Adults.

Bader, Bonnie. *Golden Quest*.

Silver Moon Press, 1993. Gr. 2-4

Eleven-year-old David, his sister Celia, and their African American friend, Georgie, are caught up in the debate over whether or not California will join the United States as a free state. Historical fiction set in the 1850's, this title includes the Compromise of 1850 and the California Gold Rush.

Balmes, Kathy. *Thunder on the Sierra*.

Silver Moon Press, 2001. Gr. 4-7

When recently orphaned Mateo loses his beloved palomino to the notorious bandit Joaquin Murieta, he has only one thought – he must get her back. But in Gold Rush era California, that is no easy task. Swearing to track down his horse, Mateo becomes an *arriero* – leading pack mules through gold rush camps, lightning storms in the Sierra, and risky encounters with crazed miners. But when he learns that his father's old rancho may be in danger from Yankee squatters who are aided by the new American government, Mateo begins to realize that more is at stake than the

fate of his horse. An exciting, well researched, fictional account of a California boy in the 1850s that includes the devastating Foreign Miner's Tax and the Land Act of 1851.

Banim, Lisa. *American Dreams*.

Silver Moon Press, 1993. Gr. 2-4

Developments in World War II force Amy Mochida and her family to move from Hollywood to an internment camp with other Japanese Americans, changing Amy's friendship with eleven-year-old Jeannie.

Bledsoe, Lucy Jane. *Tracks in the Snow*.

Holiday House, 1997. Gr. 4-6

Ten-year-old Erin uses a project on animal tracks as an excuse to head into the Sierra Mountains to search for her missing teenage babysitter, Amy. The search turns into a struggle for survival as Erin and her science partner, Tiffany, are caught in a spring blizzard.

Bierhorst, John. *The People with Five Fingers*.

Marshall Cavendish, 2000. Gr. K-5

Coyote and Lizard and the other animals talk, dream, and create a world filled with mountains, valleys, rivers, salt, and berries so that people from different races and languages may live, work, and dream. The people are all different, but they are the same, too, with hands Lizard imprinted, "that have five fingers like yours and mine." Robert Andrew Parker's imaginative illustrations end with Coyote looking toward the Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco.

Block, Francesca Lia. *Cherokee Bat and the Goat Guys*.

HarperCollins, 1992. Gr. YA

Cherokee Bat forms a slinkster cool band that whirls its members into the pain and dangers of love and growing up among the canyons and nightclubs of Los Angeles. Block's inventive use of language and vibrant mix of characters will be familiar to readers of her two previous novels.

Block, Francesca Lia. *Girl Goddess #9*.

HarperCollins, 1996. Gr. YA

There is a goddess in every girl, says Block, and in these stories each struggles to seek love, solace, and family in a painful world. Funny, poignant, and heartbreaking, these are moving portraits of young women who are unmistakably Californians.

Block, Francesca Lia. *The Hanged Man*.

HarperCollins, 1994. Gr. YA

Laurel, tormented by memories of her now-dead father's incest and her present fear of a slashing rapist, tells her story of survival and possible rejuvenation in a wild and tumultuous contemporary Los Angeles. Told in first-person poetic prose, this novel will appeal to many Block fans, but is definitely for the mature reader.

Block, Francesca Lia. *I Was a Teenage Fairy*.

HarperCollins, 1998. Gr. YA

Named after the doll, 11-year-old Barbie is forced into a modeling career by her overbearing stage mother. After an incident of molestation by a well-respected photographer, and the loss of

an absent father combined with the further neglect by her mother, Barbie looks to a feisty, sexy fairy for support. An intoxicating modern-day fairy tale about sexual abuse, homosexuality, drug abuse, and suicide; the poetic and haunting use of words conceals much of the ugliness inside.

Block, Francesca Lia. *Violet and Claire*.

Joanna Cotler, 1999. Gr. YA

Two self-absorbed teenage girls, Violet, the dark-haired, aspiring screenwriter with a cynical perspective and a privileged lifestyle, and Claire, the blonde “Tinker Bell,” poetry writing, naïve waif, are as different as night and day. As they follow their dream of developing their movie, all the stereotypical sinister elements of southern California counter culture – cutting, rape, eating disorders, drugs, sex, murder, and more – threaten their survival.

Block, Francesca Lia. *Weetzie Bat*.

HarperCollins, 1989. Gr. YA

Block's tale of growing up and finding love and family in Los Angeles is part fairy tale, part Hollywood, and pure Weetzie Bat. This quirky love story is filled with the sights and sounds and people of the Venice area and could happen only in California.

Block, Francesca Lia. *Witch Baby*.

HarperCollins, 1991. Gr. YA

In a sequel to *Weetzie Bat*, Block focuses on Witch Baby, Weetzie Bat's daughter, who, like her mother in the previous book, is searching for herself and family. Once again, Block presents an unforgettable depiction of the "hot and cool, glam and slam, rich and trashy, devils and angels" place that is Los Angeles.

Boyd, Candy Dawson. *Chevrolet Saturdays*.

Macmillan, 1993. Gr. 5-7

Joe Davis doesn't want to like his step-father or his new school. He especially doesn't want to spend Saturdays working with his stepfather on houses and riding in his 1953 Chevrolet truck. He wants his real family back again. Boyd creates a believable family struggling to come together while searching the Bay Area for a beloved pet.

Boyd, Candy Dawson. *A Different Beat*.

Puffin, 1996. Gr. 5-8

Being accepted at the Oakland Performing Arts Middle School is a dream come true for Jessie, but it also means confronting challenges from her father and classmates to prove she can succeed academically and personally, as well as artistically.

Bunting, Eve. *Coffin on a Case*.

HarperCollins, 1992. Gr. 3-6

Seventh-grader Henry Coffin solves two crimes at once when he helps sixteen-year-old Lily Lawson track down her missing mother in Los Angeles. 1993 Edgar Allen Poe Juvenile Award.

Bunting, Eve. *A Day's Work*. Illus. by Ronald Himler.

Harcourt Brace, 1994. Gr. 1-4

Francisco, a Mexican-American boy, lies to help his abuelo (grandfather) find work with a gardener. Unknowingly, Francisco and Abuelo pull out all the good plants while leaving the weeds. Although angry at Francisco, Abuelo teaches his grandson important lessons about truth and responsibility. Himler creates evocative and realistic watercolor and gouache illustrations.

Bunting, Eve. *Going Home*. Illus. by David Diaz.

HarperCollins, 1996. Gr. K-3

To Mama and Papa, Mexico is home even though they now live in California. During Christmas vacation, the family visits Mexico. Lovingly portrayed in David Diaz's beautiful illustrations.

Bunting, Eve. *The Hideout*.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991. Gr. 4-7

When Andy runs away from home, he finds an incredible hiding place - the luxurious penthouse suite at an elegant hotel. Downtown San Francisco is the background for this well-paced thriller.

Bunting, Eve. *Jumping the Nail*.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991. Gr. YA

No one in La Paloma has "jumped the Nail", the ninety-foot drop from the cliffs to the ocean since a terrible accident ten years ago. Set in a coastal California community, this story explores the issues of peer pressure and risk-taking among teenagers.

Bunting, Eve. *Smoky Night*. Illus. by David Diaz.

Harcourt Brace, 1994. Gr. K-4

David Diaz's riveting illustrations - expressionistic, boldly-drawn urban scenes framed by photos of collages of three dimensional objects related to these scenes - lead the reader through Eve Bunting's story of a child's-eye view of the 1992 Los Angeles riots. Although Bunting's story may simplify the meaning of the riots, the 1994 Caldecott winner enlightens and engages young children. 1995 ALA Notable Book for Children; 1995 Caldecott Medal.

Bunting, Eve. *So Far From the Sea*.

Houghton Mifflin, 1998. Gr. 1-6

A contemporary Japanese-American girl and her family visit the site of the Manzanar Relocation Camp. There, back in 1942, her father was interned and her grandfather died. This difficult chapter in American history is explored without placing blame or railing against past injustices. Evocative illustrations equal the emotional impact of the text. Readers of all ages are left to question, reflect, and never forget.

Bunting, Eve. *A Sudden Silence*.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988. Gr. YA

The Pacific Coast Highway forms the backdrop for this story as Jesse Harmon struggles with his guilt and questions after his deaf brother, Bry, is killed by a hit-and-run driver.

Bunting, Eve. *Summer Wheels*.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992. Gr. 3-5

The "Bicycle Man" allows the children of his Los Angeles neighborhood to borrow the old bicycles he cleans and repairs as long as they follow the rules. When a new boy tries to buck the system, the children seek justice.

Buzbee, Lewis. *Steinbeck's Ghost*. (2009 Beatty Award)

Feiwel and Friends, 2008. Gr. 7-12

Travis and his parents have moved out of downtown Salinas to a new house in a development, and he feels out of place. Whenever he has the chance, Travis sneaks back to his old neighborhood which includes Salinas' John Steinbeck Library. During his visits he becomes involved in the campaign to save the library and embroiled in a mystery related to John Steinbeck. Buzbee's intriguing tale creatively combines literary, historical and modern California.

Cadnum, Michael. *Blood Gold*.

Viking, 2004. Gr. YA

Join 18-year-old William on every muddy step through the Isthmus of Panama, every swallow of weevil-infested bread on the ocean voyage to San Francisco, every jolt of the wagon as he journeys to the gold fields of California — not to strike it rich, but to track down the man who wronged his friend, Elizabeth. The tedium, danger, and lure of the gold rush experience are authentically drawn, as is the amazing array of characters who William encounters along the way. Gritty and realistic, William's understated voice strikes a perfect balance.

Cadnum, Michael. *Breaking the Fall*.

Viking, 1992. Gr. YA

Jared's game is invisibility, breaking into Oakland homes while there are people inside. Stanley looks towards a loving relationship with Sky to help him stop playing Jared's dangerous game.

Cadnum, Michael. *Edge*.

Viking, 1997. Gr. YA

When Zachary's father is shot by an unknown assailant, Zachary explores various neighborhoods in San Francisco and the East Bay looking for revenge.

Cadnum, Michael. *Rundown*.

Viking, 1999. Gr. YA

Sixteen-year-old Cassandra pretends she's been raped while out jogging near her Berkeley home, exactly one month before her sister's much anticipated wedding.

Cadnum, Michael. *Taking It*.

Viking, 1995. Gr. YA

Anna Charles lives with her mother in North Berkeley, but she does her shoplifting in San Francisco.

Cameron, Eleanor. *The Private Worlds of Julia Redfern*.

Dutton, 1988. Gr. 5-8

In this fifth and final novel about would-be-writer Julia Redfern, Julia is fifteen and still living in Berkeley. This fine series is set in the 1920s and is based loosely on Eleanor Cameron's own youth in the San Francisco Bay Area. [OP]

Carkeet, David. *Quiver River*.  
HarperCollins, 1991. Gr. YA

In the sequel to *The Silent Treatment*, Ricky and Nate are in charge of writing the clues for this year's treasure hunt and are spending their summer working at a campground lake resort in the Sierras. Ricky is on the trail of other secrets, too, as he discovers mysterious signs of a Miwok hunter.

Carkeet, David. *The Silent Treatment*.  
Harper, 1988. Gr. YA

Two friends search for hidden treasure through clues published in the weekly newspaper of a small gold country town. Equal parts of humor and mystery flavor this first book in a series.

Carlson, Lori Marie. *Barrio Streets, Carnival Dreams*.  
Henry Holt, 1996. Gr. 7-12

Poems and essays by more than twenty-five Latino authors and artists, ranging from Pura Belpre to Rosie Perez, are collected here in celebration of the culture of Spanish-speaking Americans.

Castellucci, Cecil. *Boy Proof*.  
Candlewick Press, 2005. Gr. 6-12

Sixteen-year-old Victoria calls herself Egg after a sci-fi heroine she emulates. She prefers to be alone until a new boy comes to school and she begins to wish she knew how to be more friendly to people. A likeable heroine with a strong sense of Los Angeles and the film industry. 2006 ALA Best Book for Young Adults. [IP, 2006]

Choldenko, Gennifer. *Al Capone Does My Shirts*. (2005 Beatty Award)  
Putnam Juvenile, 2004. Gr. 5-8

In 1934, twelve-year-old Moose Flanagan lives on Alcatraz Island with his father, an electrician, his mother, and his autistic sister Natalie. Unhappy that he moved from his friends and baseball team, he makes new friends and with the warden's daughter, a junior master mind of trouble. 2005 ALA Notable Book for Children; 2005 ALA Best Book for Young Adults; 2005 Newbery Honor; 2004 Sid Fleischman Humor Award.

Climo, Shirley. *T.J.'s Ghost*.  
Crowell, 1989. Gr. 4-6

While visiting her great aunt and uncle on the California coast, T.J. meets a mysterious boy who seems to appear whenever the Pigeon Point foghorn sounds - but the foghorn hasn't worked for years and nobody else seems to hear it. This ghost story is based on accounts of an actual shipwreck near Santa Cruz in 1866.

Coats, Laura Jane. *The Almond Orchard*.  
Macmillan, 1991. Gr. 1-4

In the first part of this short illustrated story, a little girl recounts the activities that shape each season in her father's almond orchard. Many years later, when she owns the orchard, the almonds are harvested in a very different way. The California Central Valley setting is mentioned only on the dust jacket, but the short text and informative, softly colored pictures on each page help the reader follow the orchard's changing cycles and times. [OP]

Cochrane, Patricia A. *Purely Rosie Pearl*.

Delacorte, 1996. Gr. 4-7

Rosie Pearl and her family are migrant laborers in California during the Great Depression. Their reputation ensures them work in the fields but Rosie Pearl exerts herself - physically and mentally - to help achieve her family's goal of becoming more than field workers.

Coerr, Eleanor. *Chang's Paper Pony*. (1989 Beatty Award)

Harper & Row, 1988. Gr. 1-3

In an accurate easy-to-read story with child appeal, Eleanor Coerr recreates the experiences of a young Chinese boy who works in a California mining camp with his grandfather during the Gold Rush. A concluding note provides historical perspective to Chang's story.

Cohn, Rachel. *Shrimp*.

Simon & Schuster, 2005. Gr. 9-12

Cyd Charisse has returned to San Francisco and her true love, Shrimp. Senior year forces her to re-examine her feelings and relationships with family and friends and face the consequences of past actions as she is pummeled into making decisions about her life after high school. The aura of San Francisco permeates almost every page and contrasts delightfully with a New York City interlude. Sequel to *Gingerbread*. [IP, 2006]

Cole, Sheila. *The Canyon*.

HarperCollins, 2002. Gr. 4-8

Young Zachary Barnes is shocked and dismayed to learn that the San Ramon canyon he and his neighbors enjoy is scheduled to be turned into a luxury housing development. Cole portrays a fine example of the suburban-housing boom that is occurring in California, and the toll this is taking on the state's natural resources. Readers will relate to Zachary's efforts to save the canyon he loves, and will cheer him on in his efforts.

Cottonwood, Joe. *The Adventures of Boone Barnaby*.

Scholastic, 1990. Gr. 6-8

Boone Barnaby and his two best friends learn about the adult version of truth and justice through their adventures in a small California town in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Cottonwood, Joe. *Babcock*.

Scholastic, 1996. Gr. 6-8

Can a chubby, briefcase-toting, bug-oriented African-American teenager befriends a skinny, freckled, running-oriented white girl whose mother is very against the whole idea? Sequel to *Danny Ain't* and *The Adventures of Boone Barnaby*.

Cottonwood, Joe. *Danny Ain't*.

Scholastic, 1992. Gr. 5-7

This rambling slice-of-life novel tells the story of Danny who opts to live on his own in the small community of San Puerco when his father needs to be hospitalized. Sequel to *The Adventures of Boone Barnaby*.

Cottonwood, Joe. *Quake! A Novel*.

Scholastic, 1995. Gr. 5-8

Franny was upset at being left in charge of her brother and friend while her parents were at the World Series game in San Francisco's Candlestick Park. But when an extremely strong earthquake hits her Santa Cruz mountain home, her world is literally turned upside down. During this emergency, she discovers the strength to lead and help others to safety.

Coville, Joe. *Fortune's Journey*.

Bridgewater Books, 1995. Gr. 4-6

Traveling on the Oregon Trail to California, Fortune survives disaster after disaster while she acts as the peacemaker for an acting troupe. A fun read with a little history thrown in.

Currier, Katrina Saltonstall. *Kai's Journey to Gold Mountain: An Angel Island Story*. Illustrated by Gabhor Utomo.

Angel Island Association, 2005. Gr. 3-5

"Goodbye China---Here I come, Gold Mountain," are the words of twelve-year-old Kai in 1934 as he sails from China to join his father in America. After a long, hard sea voyage, Kai's journey is not over. He must endure weeks of living and waiting in crowded conditions on Angel Island not knowing if he will ever be reunited with his father. Enduring harsh examinations while fearing that he may be sent back to China, Kai befriends another boy who is also waiting to come to America. The detailed illustrations help to portray the experiences of immigrants as they entered the United States from the East. [IP, 2006]

Cushman, Karen. *The Ballad of Lucy Whipple*. (1997 Beatty Award)

Clarion Books, 1996. Gr. 4-8

The only pioneering spirit in "California Morning Whipple" is in her name, which she changes to Lucy after her widowed mother forcibly relocates the family from their green, orderly, tasteful Massachusetts home to the muddy (or dusty) mining camp of Lucky Diggins, California. Lucy, an avid book lover, detests the lack of civility and suffers the hardships of her new surroundings, but unconsciously evolves into a Californian, finding gold in the people and natural beauty of the Northern California wilderness.

Cushman, Karen. *Rodzina*.

Clarion, 2003. Gr. 5-8

Newbery-Award winner Karen Cushman dishes up her latest spunky heroine in twelve-year-old Rodzina, a Polish immigrant who finds herself on an unforgettable journey to California aboard an orphan train in 1881. Big and tall, Rodzina is smart and dependable and a right hand for the very proper Miss Doctor. In Rodzina readers are treated to a heroine with whom they can laugh and cry, as they absorb a chapter in American history in which children grew up fast, and courage and resilience were necessities.

de la Pena, Matt. *Mexican WhiteBoy*.  
Random House, 2008. Gr. 9-12

Caught between the two worlds of his dual heritage, 16-year-old Danny Lopez doesn't fit in at his private high school in wealthy northern San Diego County where his Caucasian mother lives. Nor does he feel comfortable being "almost Albino" with his father's Mexican family - he doesn't even speak Spanish. Consequently, Danny withdraws from both worlds, rarely speaking to anyone. For the summer, however, Danny decides to stay with his father's family in National City where he meets Uno, another interracial teen who loves baseball almost as much Danny does. As Danny forms a lasting friendship with Uno and falls in love with Liberty, a recent immigrant, Danny begins to come to terms with his identity and life. Filled with authentic characters, empathetic dialogue and an exhilarating homage to baseball, *Mexican WhiteBoy* is sure to engage readers with de la Pena's exceptional storytelling. National City, as the primary setting, is clearly delineated - readers will feel that they have been there.

Denenberg, Barry. *The Journal of Ben Uchida, Citizen 13559, Mirror Lake. Internment Camp*  
Scholastic, 1999. Gr. 4-6

This "My Name is America" title documents the life of Ben Uchida and his family in a fictional World War 2 northern California internment camp. Photographs from actual internment camps and an afterward of historical fact are included. The casual reader may have trouble distinguishing historic fact from fiction, but Ben's feelings about his family's predicament ring true.

Doctorow, Cory. *Little Brother*.  
TOR, 2008. Gr. 7-12

Marcus and his friends are in the wrong place at the wrong time. When they skip school for an online game, terrorists blow up the San Francisco Bay Bridge and they end up being at ground zero. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) detains them in an undisclosed location, interrogating them for days. Except for Marcus' best friend Darryl, they are finally released under the condition that they not disclose what happened. In the meantime, DHS has put the city on lockdown, monitoring people's movements electronically through debit transactions and fast passes and questioning those whose patterns are not "normal." Marcus, determined to rescue Darryl and take down DHS, starts an underground internet movement to fight the repression.

Duey, Kathleen. *Alexia Ellery Finsdale: San Francisco, 1906*.  
Simon & Schuster, 1997. Gr. 4-6

Alexia lives with her father in San Francisco just before the great earthquake. It is a difficult, dangerous time, and her father has not made her life any easier by gambling away their rent money and losing job after job. Alexia feels at home in Mrs. Tanner's boarding house, and she wants to stay there. Duey presents an exciting story filled with believable historical details. This is part of the *American Diaries* series, which are stories of different girls living in different periods of U.S. history.

Duey, Kathleen. *Survival! Death Valley*.  
Aladdin, 1998. Gr. 5-8

Uprooted from their home, the Brantcourt family begins the trek across half a continent to California in hopes of striking it rich in the gold rush. Taking a short cut that will supposedly

lead them to California faster, the family enters the unrelentingly hot desert of Death Valley alone. First Pa gets injured and then the wagon breaks an axle. This leaves twins, Jessamine and Will, to set off on their own across the endless sand and heat, to find help for their stranded family.

Duey, Kathleen. *Survival! Earthquake.*

Aladdin, 1998. Gr. 5-8

Brendan O'Connor is a self-reliant orphan who works as a delivery boy to the finer hotels and businesses of the financial district in San Francisco. Li Dai Yue is a Chinese immigrant running away from her family and an arranged marriage in Chinatown. These two strangers will need to rely on one another in order to survive the Great San Francisco Earthquake and the ensuing fires, riots, and aftershocks.

Ellis, Ella Thorp. *Year of My Indian Prince.*

Delacorte Press, 2001. Gr. YA

A fictionalized version of the author's experiences in 1945 when, at the age of sixteen, she is admitted to a tuberculosis hospital in San Francisco and finds solace in the gifts and friendship of another patient, a young man from India whose father is a maharajah's son. Excellent details of a disease that used to force many people in California to undergo bed-rest for several years in sanitariums where, despite the best care, one did not always survive. Not much about the locale outside of the sanitarium.

Elmore, Patricia. *Susannah and the Purple Mongoose Mystery.*

Dutton, 1992. Gr. 4-7

Susannah and her sidekick, Lucy, are on the trail of a neighborhood pyromaniac, and their most important clue is a boy riding a purple Mongoose bicycle. Finding him won't be easy in a city as large as Oakland, but find him they must before the entire block goes up in flames. [OP]

Enderle, Judith R. and Tessler, Stephanie G. *Francis the Earthquake Dog.*

Chronicle Books, 1996. Gr. 1-3

When Edward brings a stray dog home to the St. Francis Hotel, where he and his chef father live, the dog creates havoc in the busy kitchen and then disappears. At dawn, the Great Earthquake of 1906 strikes San Francisco and the hotel must be abandoned. Will Edward ever find his little Francis?

Ewing, Lynne. *Drive-By.*

HarperCollins, 1996. Gr. 6-8

Los Angeles gang members have killed his brother and now they are after Tito. Can he protect himself and his family while he tries to find out why his brother was killed?

Fitch, Janet. *Kicks.*

Clarion Books, 1995. Gr. YA

Until Laurie rescues her best friend Carla from a bikers' den where her friend has overdosed, she thinks the LA street life is far better than living her mother's conservative lifestyle. When she truly sees the dangers of this life, she realizes that it isn't what she wants for herself.

Fleischman, Sid. *Bandit's Moon*. (1999 Beatty Award)

Greenwillow Books, 1998. Gr. 3-6

Bad luck follows orphaned Annyrose like an afternoon shadow. Her brother is lost to her -- gone to strike it rich in the California gold rush -- and now she's been snatched by famed Mexican bandit, Joaquin Murieta, who thinks she's a boy and decides she might be useful in his own quest. Can this unlikely duo help each other? Non-stop action and a plot with more twists and turns that a canyon wall add up to a signature novel. 1999 ALA Notable Book for Children.

Fleishman, Sid. *Bo & Mzzz Mad*.

Greenwillow Books, 2001. Gr. 4-7

A fast-paced, suspenseful adventure story set in California's Mojave Desert. Recently orphaned Bo Gammage, age 12, visits distant relatives on his mother's side, the two sides of the family having feuded for more than a generation over a mysterious gold mine. Bo encounters his spunky 13-year-old cousin, Madeleine, who calls herself Mzzz Mad, her aging cowboy-actor grandpa, and peace-keeping Aunt Juna. Rousing plot twists involving small time criminals, a deadly rattlesnake, and a fake treasure map, as well as larger-than-life characters, gives this contemporary western tale broad reader appeal.

Fleischman, Sid. *Disappearing Act*.

Greenwillow, 2003. Gr. 5-8

When their archaeologist mother mysteriously disappears while in Mexico, 12-year-old Kevin and his older sister Holly fear they are being stalked. The two run off to Venice, California where they change their names and make a living as street performers. But have they successfully eluded their stalker, the Toad? This suspenseful, oftentimes humorous, tale evokes the Venice street scene lifestyle while keeping young readers guessing as to what comes next as the suspense builds.

Fleischman, Sid. *Jim Ugly*.

Greenwillow, 1992. Gr. 4-8

Unconvinced that a coffin really contains his father's body, twelve-year-old Jake leaves Blowfly, Nevada, in 1894 searching for answers. Accompanied by his father's dog, Jim Ugly, Jake finds himself in a fast-paced adventure that winds up in San Francisco. Filled with humorous situations, the story draws readers into the drama through its convincing setting, characters, and dialogue. 1993 ALA Notable Book for Children.

Fleischman, Sid. *The Giant Rat of Sumatra: or Pirates Galore*. Illustrated by John Hendrix.

Greenwillow Books, 2005. Gr. 4-6

A twelve-year-old cabin boy named Shipwreck quickly discovers that his adventures are just beginning once he arrives in San Diego in 1846. Accompanied by the dashing yet witty Captain Gallows, Shipwreck finds himself in some comical situations involving pirates, bandits, hidden treasure, and the search for Gallows' lost love. The historical backdrop of the Mexican-American war provides an intriguing glimpse of the last days of California under Mexican rule. A cast of colorful characters rounds out this fast-paced book filled with humor and adventure. [IP, 2006]

Fletcher, Susan. *Walk Across the Sea*.

Atheneum, 2001. Gr. 4-8

The anti-Chinese prejudices expressed during the 1880s in Crescent City, a small coastal town north of San Francisco, are developed in this story of Eliza's friendship with Wah Chung. Eliza questions her father's role in the expulsion of Crescent City's Chinese community and hides Wah Chung next to their lighthouse. Religious and medical attitudes, and the trade of lighthouse keeping, are portrayed in this story, which is based upon true events.

Gardner, Theodore Roosevelt. *Something Nice to See*. Illus. by Peter Hamlin.

Allen A. Knoll, 1994. Gr. P-3

Barry is rejected by his classmates because he is different; he can read. His neighbor, Italian immigrant Sam Rodia, the builder of the Watts Towers, comforts him and explains how they are similar in their both being different. Told in verse.

Garland, Sherry. *Valley of the Moon: The Diary of María Rosalia de Milagros*.

Scholastic, 2001. Gr. 4-8

The fictional diary of thirteen-year old Maria, servant to a wealthy Spanish family that took her in when her Indian mother died, does a good job explaining the aspects of life in Alta California, particularly in the Sonoma Valley during 1846-1850. Includes ranchos and rancheros, the Californios, the wealthy Spanish and the laboring Indians, cholera, the incoming Americanos, questions of loyalty, the Mexican-American war; the Gold Rush and its consequences. Includes a historical note about the settlement and early history of California.

Goldin, Barbara. *Diamond Red Means Good Fortune: A Story of San Francisco's Chinatown*.

Viking, 1994. Gr. 2-5

In San Francisco in 1868, twelve-year-old Jin Mun attempts to rescue his neighbor, a young Chinese girl who is imprisoned in her master's house.

Grant, Cynthia D. *Shadow Man*.

Atheneum, 1992. YA

The town of Willow Creek near Mendocino is deeply affected by the loss of Gabe, a teenage alcoholic who wraps his truck around a tree. Everyone, including his girlfriend, wonders how they could have saved him.

Gregory, Kristiana. *Earthquake at Dawn*.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992. Gr. 5-8

This novel about the 1906 San Francisco earthquake focuses on the experiences of an actual witness, twenty-two year-old photographer Edith Irvine. Although plot and characterization are marred by melodramatic excess, Gregory's careful research fills this novel with fascinating details of the earthquake and its aftermath.

Gregory, Kristiana. *Orphan Runaways*.

Scholastic Press, 1998. Gr. 5-8

Instead of being separated by adoption, 12-year-old Danny and his younger brother, Judd, decide to run away from a San Francisco orphanage and search for their missing uncle, a miner. Finding him in Bodie, a gold rush boomtown with his Chinese bride, the two boys must first come to

terms with what truly makes a family. A colorful cast of supporting characters highlights this historically accurate tale of family and racial intolerance.

Gregory, Kristiana. *Seeds of Hope: The Gold Rush Diary of Susanna Fairchild, California Territory, 1849.*

Scholastic, 2001. Gr. 4-8

The narrative shines when depicting the daily lives of two sisters - their struggle to afford food, make a home and learn to be women without any female influence. They endure many privations as a friend of the father, who is deep into the gold fields, absconds with his gold. Woven throughout the story is the girls' friendship with a Mexican girl and her hardworking, persecuted family. A riveting and triumphal story of two gutsy young women.

Gregory, Kristiana. *Stowaway: A Tale of California Pirates.*

Apple, 1995. Gr. 4-6

When pirates attack his home in the Monterey Bay settlement, Carlito sees his father killed and tries to get back at the pirates. This backfires and Carlito is captured. He makes friends with other captives but has great difficulty dealing with the horrid conditions under which he lives. Based on a true event in 1818, this book details life during a difficult period in California history, but Carlito fails to become three-dimensional.

Harris, Mark Jonathan. *Come the Morning.*

Bradbury, 1989. Gr. 5-7

Thirteen-year-old Ben Gibson, his mother, and two younger siblings join the ranks of the homeless in downtown Los Angeles.[OP]

Harvey, Brett. *Cassie's Journey: Going West in the 1860s.* Illus. by Kogan Ray.

Holiday House, 1988. Gr. 2-5

A young girl talks about the hardships of traveling with her family in a covered wagon from Illinois to California during the 1860s. Deborah Kogan Ray's illustrations draw one in.

Haugaard, Kay. *No Place.*

Milkweed, 1999. Gr. 4-6

Arturo and his sixth-grade classmates begin a project to turn a junk-filled lot into a park in their inner-city neighborhood without hope of success, but find that their dreams can become reality.

Herrera, Juan Felipe. *CrashBoomLove: a Novel In Verse.*

University of New Mexico, 1999. Gr. YA

Struggling to come to terms with being abandoned by his migrant father for a new family in Denver, 16-year old Cesar Garcia is struggling to survive at Rambling West High School in Fowlerville, California. Cesar finds himself in the wrong place at the wrong time as the Hmongs, the Chicanos, and the African-Americans are choosing up sides.

Himmelblau, Linda. *The Trouble Begins.*

Delacorte Books, 2005. Gr. 4-8

Traveling with his family from Vietnam, and left behind for ten years in the Philippines with his grandmother to recover from tuberculosis, 11-year-old Du and his grandmother have just arrived

in California. He doesn't remember his family, and his independence and stubbornness create even more obstacles in his adjustment to a new culture and language. Readers will identify with Du's frustrations at school and at home, especially his tense relationship with his father, and relish his escapades as he grows into the person his grandmother knows him to be. An authentic portrayal of a refugee family struggling to survive in a new country and of a young boy finding his place will resonate with many immigrants. A 2006 ALA Notable Book for Children. [IP, 2006]

Hines, Gary. *Ride in the Crummy*.

Greenwillow, 1991. Gr. P

Two boys have an exciting ride in the caboose of a big train that is taking them to visit their father in a Northern California logging camp.[OP]

Hobbs, Valerie. *Carolina Crow Girl*.

Frances Foster, 1999. Gr. 5-7

Carolina, baby sister Trinity, and aging flower-child mother Melanie have parked their school bus home in the field overlooking Stefan's house near Santa Barbara. Carolina feels confined by her non-traditional lifestyle until she meets a wealthy boy, Stefan, who is bound by his wheelchair and sad family memories. Each child wants to break free to fly; it is Stefan's crow that shows them the way.

Hobbs, Valerie. *How Far Would You Have Gotten If I Hadn't Called You Back?*

Orchard Books, 1995. Gr. YA

Moving to a small California mountain town where her parents are opening a restaurant opens Bron's eyes to a new way of life, including drag racing and baby showers. 1996 ALA Best Book for Young Adults.

Hobbs, Valerie. *Tender*.

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001. Gr. 6-9

Fifteen-year-old Liv leaves New York to live with the father who abandoned her at birth. He is an abalone diver with his own hard shell who works in the coastal communities surrounding Santa Barbara, circa 2000. Liv and her father are sympathetic characters and the story includes an episode in which father and daughter confront dangerous survival conditions at sea.

Holman, Felice. *Real*.

Atheneum, 1997. Gr. 5-8

In 1932, after his mother's death, Cally and his father, a Hollywood stuntman, move to the desert. Here Cally encounters Sparrow, a Cahuilla Indian boy, and his grandmother, whose spirits cannot rest until the location of their murder in 1774 is found and a traditional burial ceremony performed. Readers follow the parallel stories of the two boys in this novel that also offers a contrast between the stereotypical image of the old West in movies of the 1930s and the real West of history.

Howe, Norma. *Adventure of Blue Avenger*.

Henry Holt, 1999. Gr. YA

David Bruce Schumacher is inspired on his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday (and after his father's sudden death) to transform himself into a living, breathing version of his cartoon character creation, Blue Avenger. Dressed in his dad's old fishing vest and fashioning a blue terrycloth towel into headgear, he determines to do good in the world but only manages to cause hilarious havoc in his own neighborhood of Oakland, California.

Isaacs, Anne. *The Ghosts of Luckless Gulch*.

Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2008. Gr. 2-5

Set during the California Gold Rush, *The Ghost of Luckless Gulch* tells the story of Estrella, who almost never stops running, and of her unusual pets, the Kickle Snifter, the Sidehill Wowser, and the Rubberado puppy. The capture of Estrella's pets leads her on a typical tall tale trip to Luckless Gulch and its gold-grabbing ghosts. By the end of the story you'll know exactly how California's hills, Redwood trees, and earthquakes were created.

Jiménez, Francisco. *Breaking Through*.

Houghton Mifflin, 2001. Gr. YA

Jimenez's magnificent fictionalized autobiography picks up where his first book of memoirs, *The Circuit*, left off – when the two brothers are picked up by the I.N.S. and sent back to Mexico, only to be able to return legally to their family in Santa Maria after several difficult weeks. *Breaking Through* takes Jimenez through the end of his senior year at Santa Maria High. There's the unimaginably hard work the brothers and their mother perform, while the father increasingly suffers from severe physical and mental pain. There's the pain of first dates across ethnic lines, the epiphany about great books connecting with one's own life when Panchito reads *Grapes of Wrath*, and the important role that a school counselor plays in guiding him to think of college. Painfully but heroically, Panchito successfully handles 3 cultures: the Mexican culture of his family and the education that is separating him from his father; the poverty of the farm labor camps; and the experiences of adolescents living in the 1950s along California's Central Coast. 2002 ALA Notable Book for Children; 2002 ALA Best Book for Young Adults; 2002 Notable Social Studies Trade Book; 2002 Pura Belpre Honor Book; 2001 Tomas Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award.

Jimenez, Francisco. *The Christmas Gift/El Regalo de Navidad*.

Houghton Mifflin, 2000. Gr. 1-4

Excerpted from Jimenez's 1998 Beatty Award winning book "The Circuit", this picture book tells the semi-autobiographical story of a migrant farm his family as they have to move a few days before Christmas in order to find work. Panchito's simple desire of a ball for Christmas is even more than the family can afford. A powerful, bilingual story ably illustrated by Claire Cotts of a loving family helping a young couple even worse off than they are. 2001 ALA Notable Books for Children; 2001 Notable Social Studies Trade Book.

Jimenez, Francisco. *La Mariposa*.

Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998. Gr. 1-4

In this picture book retelling of a chapter from "The Circuit," Francisco struggles through his first year at school, understanding little of what the teacher says. As the year progresses, and the class caterpillar is slowly transformed, so too is Francisco. Also available in Spanish under the same title.

Johnson, Angela. *Toning the Sweep*.

Orchard Books, 1993. Gr. 7-12

On a visit to her grandmother, Ola, who is dying of cancer in her house in the Southern California desert, fourteen-year-old Emmie hears many stories about the past and about her family history that help her come to a better understanding of herself and her family. 1994 ALA Notable Book for Children; 1994 ALA Best Book for Young Adults; 1994 Coretta Scott King Award.

Johnston, Tony. *Any Small Goodness*. (2002 Beatty Award)

Blue Sky Press, 2001. Gr. 4-8

This is a small gem of a novel about Arturo Rodriguez and his family, friends, and school in the barrio in East Los Angeles. As they deal with a teacher who wants to Americanize their names, the disappearance of their cat, the mysterious school librarian, Ms. Cloud, as well as a retired NBA star who teaches them basketball for one dollar a year, and a drive-by shooting, they learn to see life in Papi's terms – that “any small goodness” is worth doing. A thoughtful, often funny, and transcendent book!

Johnston, Tony. *Uncle Rain Cloud*. Illus. by Fabricio Vanden Broeck

Charlesbridge, 2001. Gr. 1-4

Carlos calls his grouchy uncle, “Uncle Rain Cloud.” Why does he get so grouchy on shopping day? When he learns that his uncle is afraid to speak English in their new home in Los Angeles, the two begin to teach one another, Carlos the English words of “el blahblah,” and Uncle the Spanish names of the tongue-twister Aztec gods.

Kalman, Maira. *Max in Hollywood, Baby*.

Penguin, 1992.

Glitz and glamour and shallow people greet Max the famous dog who goes to Hollywood to write and direct a film. Will his script lay a big oouf?

Katz, Welwyn. *Wilton Whale Singer*.

McElderry, 1991. Gr. 6-8

Katz mixes coming-of-age issues with anthropomorphic mysticism, a search for Sir Francis Drake's treasure, and academic espionage in a novel that stretches the reader's credulity yet provides involving reading in a strongly depicted Point Reyes setting. [OP]

Kay, Verla. *Covered Wagons, Bumpy Trails*.

Putnam, 2000. Gr. K-4

The rhyming text describes a family's journey along the California Trail. Double-page spreads offer panoramic views of the diverse terrain traveled, while details in the paintings show California quail and golden poppies. A map and brief introduction highlight significant places between Independence, Missouri and California's Sacramento Valley.

Kay, Verla. *Gold Fever*.

Putnam, 1999. Gr. K-3

Rhythmic text and charming pencil drawings tell of Jasper's adventure as a 49er and his happy homecoming after he discovers the disillusioning reality of the Gold Rush.

Ketchum, Lisa. *Blue Coyote*.

Simon & Schuster, 1997. Gr. 4-9

Alex Beekman has left his mother and sister in Vermont and traveled to Los Angeles with his father in order to find his best friend Tito. Even Tito's parents do not know where he is and do not seem interested in knowing. Alex searches for Tito throughout the Los Angeles area, and in finding him, he discovers many important truths about the disappearance, about Tito, and about himself. A companion book to Ketchum's award-winning novel, *Twelve Days in August*.

Kidd, Nina. *June Mountain Secret*.

HarperCollins, 1991. Gr. K-3

Jen and her dad spend a day fishing for rainbow trout in the McCloud River Preserve, owned and protected by the Nature Conservancy. Beautiful pictures capture the loving interaction of the two, the beauty of the area, and identify some of the flora, fauna, and fishing gear.

Klass, David. *California Blue*.

Scholastic, 1994. Gr. YA

When seventeen-year-old John discovers a unique species of butterfly on the property of the local lumber mill, he makes a decision that turns his family and the whole town against him. A well-written, thought-provoking novel.

Koertge, Ron. *The Harmony Arms*.

Little, Brown, 1992. Gr. 6-8

This hilarious story features Gabriel and his dad, who come to Los Angeles and learn about living California-style. An obnoxious puppet, first kisses, and an oddball collection of characters make this novel a wonderful California experience. 1993 ALA Notable Book for Children.

Koertge, Ron. *Mariposa Blues*.

Joy Street/Little, Brown, 1991. Gr. 6-8

Thirteen-year-old Graham finds his relationship with his father changing as he spends his summer at a racetrack in Southern California.

Koertge, Ron. *Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright*.

Orchard Books, 1994. Gr. 6+

Eighth-grader Jesse hotly denies that his rugged grandfather, Pappy, is a candidate for a nursing home. but when Pappy insists he's seen tiger tracks in the California hills even Jesse starts to have doubts about him. Full of quirky characters and snappy dialogue. 1995 ALA Notable Books for Children; 1995 ALA Best Book for Young Adults.

Koss, Amy Goldman. *The Ashwater Experiment*.

Dial, 1999. Gr. YA

Accustomed to a nomadic lifestyle with her unconventional parents, Hillary Siegal is surprised by their decision to stay in Ashwater, California for her entire seventh-grade school year. To cope with the prospect of staying in one place for so long, she invents the "Ashwater

Experiment," in which she pretends that she is the only "real" person on earth and "watchers" are monitoring her action.

Krensky, Stephen. *The Iron Dragon Never Sleeps*.

Delacorte, 1994. Gr. 3-5

When ten-year-old Winnie visits her father in a Sierra mining town in 1867, she meets a Chinese boy and learns about the plight of the Chinese railroad workers. A bit heavy-handed, but full of interesting historical details.

Kudlinski, Kathleen. *Earthquake! A Story of Old San Francisco*.

Viking, 1993. Gr. 3-5

After the devastating 1906 earthquake hits San Francisco, twelve-year-old Phillip struggles to save the horses in his family's livery stable.

Kudlinski, Kathleen V. *Shannon: The Schoolmarm Mysteries, San Francisco, 1880*. . Illus. by Bill Farnsworth.

Aladdin Paperbacks, 1997. Gr. 3-5

Life in San Francisco during the 1880s is seen through the eyes of recent Irish immigrant Shannon O'Brien. Not only does Shannon struggle with the prejudice against Irish-Americans, but she also is shocked to learn that her friend Mi Ling is forbidden by law to attend school. Historical notes and primary source photographs in the afterword add detail to this story from the *Girlhood Journeys Collection* series.

Lattimore, Deborah Nourse. *Frida Maria: A Story of the Old Southwest*.

Browndeer/Harcourt, 1994. Gr. 2-4

Frida does not cook, sew, or dance like a "proper senorita," but when her special talent saves the day at the fiesta, she pleases her mother. Colorful and energetic paintings capture the spirit of the story.

Larson, Rodger. *What I Know Now*.

Holt, 1997. Gr. YA

"It was the summer of 1957 when I turned fourteen and I met a man named Gene Tole... and I fell in love with him, but didn't know it at the time." Dave Ryan's mother has left her husband, taking Dave back to her childhood California ranch home. She hires Gene Tole to build a garden, and Gene and Dave strike up a friendship. After finding out about Gene's homosexuality, Dave begins to discover his own emerging sexuality.

Lee, Milly. *Nim and the War Effort*.

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997. Gr. 2-4

Nim, who lives with her multigenerational family in San Francisco's Chinatown during World War II, is determined to best the school bully by collecting the most newspapers for the school paper drive. Yangsook Choi's glowing earth-toned paintings complement the details of this engaging story based on the author's childhood memories. 1998 ALA Notable Book for Children.

Leland, Dorothy Kapcha. *The Balloon Boy of San Francisco*. (2006 Beatty Award)

Tomato, 2005. Gr. 4-7

Red-haired Ready Gates is a resourceful newspaper boy in gold-rush-era San Francisco. From one job to the next, Ready darts around the city with new schemes to earn money for his hard-working, but cash-strapped, family. Using meticulously researched historical materials and based on a true account of a 14-year old boy's adventure in a runaway hot air balloon, *The Balloon Boy of San Francisco* is a light-hearted yet authentic picture of everyday life in 1850s San Francisco.

Leland, Dorothy Kupcha. *Sallie Fox: The Story of a Pioneer Girl*.

Turtleback, 1995. Gr. 4-6

Based on a true story, Sallie is a twelve-year-old girl who traveled to California in 1858, enduring many hardships on her harrowing journey. Eventually the child arrives at her uncle's ranch near Vacaville where she plants an acorn that becomes the famous "Nut Tree," for which a Vacaville restaurant was named.

Leonard, Laura. *Finding Papa*.

Atheneum, 1991. Gr. 4-6

Abby, Joel, and Damaris take the four-day train trip from Estes, Kansas, to California, where they hope to settle down with their father. This satisfying family adventure gives the reader a good look at turn-of-the-century life in Sacramento and San Francisco. [OP]

Levinson, Nancy Smiler. *Snowshoe Thompson*.

HarperCollins, 1992. Gr. 1-3

This easy reader chronicles the first trip by Norwegian immigrant John Thompson, who became a legend in the gold country when he first used skis to carry mail through the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Levitin, Sonia. *Boom Town*.

Orchard Books, 1998. Gr. 1-4

In this rollicking sequel to *Nine for California*, we find young Amanda and her family settling in town near the gold fields. When Pa takes one of Amanda's gooseberry pies, he comes home with money jingling in his pocket from selling pieces of pie, twenty-five cents a slice. Amanda's Fine Pies is established and other businesses quickly follow. Soon it's a regular boom town, and all because of Amanda's gooseberry pie.

Levitin, Sonia. *Clem's Chances*.

Orchard Books, 2001. Gr. 5+

In this fabulous adventure, we meet fourteen-year-old Clem Fontayne in 1860, as he journeys from Missouri to California, in search of his father, who dreamed of gold but ended up publishing a newspaper in San Francisco for French immigrants. You can feel and almost taste the hard scrabble life, from the time Clem's starving mother and little sister die in Missouri waiting for money and letters that never come, through life with cruel neighbors, friendship with Molly, a girl who deserves better than her mean-spirited family, and a host of colorful characters whom Clem meets on his way west. There are wealthy college boys out for a lark, sadly misused Indians, bushwackers, a black man named Gabriel with an incredible tale to tell, controversy going through Mormon territory, and much more.

Levitin, Sonia. *Nine for California*. Illus. by Cat Bowman Smith.  
Orchard Books, 1996. Gr. 2-4

In language as bouncy as a stagecoach ride, young Amanda narrates this rollicking tall tale about traveling from Missouri to California on a stagecoach with her mother and siblings. Amanda relates her mother's ingenious solutions to every emergency they encounter - from stampeding buffalo to bandits. Based on letters and diaries of the period, this is illustrated in an appropriately madcap style by Cat Bowman Smith.

Levy, Marilyn. *Run For Your Life*.  
Houghton Mifflin, 1996. Gr. 5-8

Life in an Oakland housing project can be difficult for fourteen-year-old Keisha and her friends, but when the recreation director persuades them to join the new track team, they find they can be winners in many ways. ALA Best Book for Young Adults; 1996/1997 Society of School Librarians International.

Lindquist, Susan Hart. *Summer Soldiers*.  
Delacorte, 1999. Gr. 5-8

Joe's father and most of the men in his small sheep-farming community have enlisted and been sent overseas to fight in the first World War, leaving their wives and children to run the ranches. Joe ponders the essence of courage as he and his friends battle neighborhood bullies.

London, Jonathan. *Old Salt, Young Salt*.  
Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1996. Gr. 2-4

The young boy may be inexperienced, but his beginner's luck is almost magical on a Bodega Bay fishing trip with his father when he witnesses a breaching whale, lands a Chinook salmon, and gets to steer the boat home.

Lowell, Susan. *I am Lavina Cumming*.  
Milkweed Editions, 1993. Gr. 4+

While staying with relatives in Northern California after the death of her mother, ten-year-old Lavina sees the arrival of the automobile and experiences the great San Francisco earthquake.

Luger, Harriett. *Bye, Bye, Bali Kai*.  
Browndeer, 1996. Gr. 5-6

Suzie Cook, age eleven, needs money. Her father's unemployment checks have stopped, and her mother doesn't make enough to pay the rent. When Suzie's best friend deserts her and her family becomes homeless, living out of their old car, things seem truly hopeless. This realistic novel paints a clear portrait of how even middle class families can slip into homelessness.

Ly, Many. *Home is East*.  
Random House, 2005. Gr. 5-8

Eleven-year-old Cambodian-American Amy must make many changes in her life after her unhappy mother leaves the family. She and her father work through their grief and abandonment while building a new life in San Diego. The feeling of traditional Cambodian ethnicity is strong, even while it contrasts with American and Cambodian-American differences. [IP, 2006]

Markel, Michelle. *Gracias, Rosa*.

Concept Books, 1995. Gr. P-3

When Kate is unhappy with her new babysitter, Rosa, who speaks only Spanish, Rosa gives her a Guatemalan doll. Newly arrived in Los Angeles, Rosa learns English and tells Kate about her own little girl. When Rosa leaves to rejoin her daughter, Kate sends a special doll to Juana as a gift. Spanish glossary included.

Martin, Ann M. *Dawn, Diary 3*.

Scholastic, 1999. Gr. 5-8

Dawn, originally introduced in the *Babysitters Club* series, is back in California. She and her friends star in their own *California Diary* series that tackles serious issues along with standard boyfriend/girlfriend teen interests. In this title, Dawn and her friend Sunny are on the outs, but are united in their concern over Sunny's cancer-stricken mother.

Martinez, Victor. *Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida*.

HarperCollins, 1996. Gr. YA

This portrait of a Mexican-American family in California's Central Valley includes problems common in young adult novels - alcoholism, teen pregnancy, gangs, etc., yet Manny, the fourteen-year-old narrator, and his family are so refreshingly unique, real, and human, that their stories transcend the familiar. Serious, moving, and funny, this is an upbeat coming-of-age tale. 1996 National Book Award; 1998 Pura Belpre Award.

Mazer, Harry. *A Boy No More*.

Simon & Schuster, 2004. Gr. 6-10

Mazer continues the story of fifteen-year-old Adam Pelko, who was first introduced in *A Boy At War*. Adam has returned with his mother and sister to Bakersfield in the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor, in which his father was killed. Adam soon learns that his best friend, a Japanese American, and his entire family have been relocated to the Manzanar internment camp. Torn between loyalty to his family and to his friends, Adam must face up to the discrimination that led to his friends' imprisonment. As someone who lived through these tumultuous times, Mazer presents here a thoughtful, thought-provoking picture of California during the World War II years.

McClain, Margaret. *Bellboy: A Mule Train Journey*.

New Mexico Publishing, 1990. Gr. 4-6

California history is explored from a fresh angle in this slightly old fashioned but absorbing story about twelve-year-old Jake's job as a bellboy - the lead rider in a mule pack train in the 1870s. On Jake's first trip through the Trinity, Marble, and Salmon Mountains to Arcata and back, the reader comes to know him and his companions and experience the very real dangers. As Jake becomes familiar with the countryside and people along the way, he also hears some memorable stories of California history. Written by a former California school librarian who grew up listening to family stories of these days. [OP]

Mochizuki, Ken. *Baseball Saved Us*.

Lee and Low, 1993. Gr. 2-4

"Shorty" is sent to a Japanese internment camp with his family during World War II. The adults realize that the boys need something to do, so with a lot of hard work, they form a baseball league, making a baseball field of hard dirt, and creating uniforms out of mattress covers. Mochizuki shows the camp, which could be any of the internment camps, as the prison it was, while also acknowledging the hope and strong sense of survival that also prevailed.

Mowry, Jess. *Babylon Boyz*.

Simon & Schuster, 1997. Gr. YA

Babylon could be Oakland, California, or not. In any case, this is a book about the inner city and the teenagers who live there, their deep dilemmas, their affection for each other, and their loyalty to improving the lot of their community. On the provocative book cover, giant nails seem about to pierce the vulnerable, highlighted body of a young black man. So, too, in the story by Oakland author Jess Mowry: the teens find a suitcase of cocaine and must decide whether to sell it for the money that may provide them with opportunities or get rid of it before it helps to poison their community.

Mowry, Jess. *Ghost Train*.

Henry Holt, 1996. Gr. 6-9

Remi, who has just moved from Haiti to Oakland, is awakened on his first night by a monstrous locomotive coming toward his bedroom window. The next day, he finds only rusty tracks, so he and his friend Niya investigate the secret behind the ghostly train.

Na, An. *A Step from Heaven*.

Front Street, 2001. Gr. YA

Young Ju is a daughter in a Korean immigrant family who relies upon social and psychological strengths when dealing with her father's failed assimilation to American life in Los Angeles. The United States is supposed to be a "step from heaven," but her father's reactions to employment and language problems are violent and complicated. Young Ju's sensitivity and intelligence allow her to overcome the hardships of family life and balance the contrasting expectations that come from her home and her school. 2002 ALA Notable Books for Children; 2002 Best Book for Young Adults; 2002 Michael L. Printz Award; 2001 National Book Award Honor.

Nasaw, Jonathan. *Shakedown Street*.

Delacorte, 1993. Gr. YA

Through a series of misadventures, Caro and her mother end up on the streets of San Francisco, homeless, broke, and scared. Managing to hook up with a group of homeless characters for protection, Caro sees her life change dramatically. When her mom is jailed, Caro comes very close to being raped while sleeping in a park and becoming a hooker to support herself. While most young homeless kids are not as fortunate as Caro in having so many near-misses, Nasaw gives a good glimpse into the lives of the homeless in our streets, and the refusal of many to even acknowledge their existence.

Nelson, Teresa. *Earthshine*.

Orchard Books, 1994. Gr. 5-8

When twelve-year-old Slim's father is attacked by AIDS, she joins a support group for children of AIDS sufferers at a Hollywood church. There she meets Isaiah and his pregnant, AIDS-

stricken mother and is taken on an emotional rollercoaster ride from hope to anger to understanding. Poignant, but never sentimental, with quite a bit of humor to lighten the pain. 1995 ALA Notable Book for Children; 1995 ALA Best Book for Young Adults; 1995 Boston Globe Horn Book Honor.

Nelson, Theresa. *Ruby Electric*.

Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2003. Gr. 4-9

Twelve-year-old Ruby sees her life as a screenplay, one which Stephen Spielberg will one day produce. Smart, funny, spunky and courageous, Ruby sets out to solve the mystery of her disappearing father, to help her struggling single mom with her little brother, and to clean up the once-running Los Angeles River, which involves a fascinating discovery. An imaginative book with realistic and likeable characters. 2004 ALA Notable Books for Children.

Nielsen, Virginia. *Batty Hattie*.

Marshall Cavendish, 1999. Gr. 4-6

Harriet becomes fascinated with the bats her uncle studies when she stays with him in the middle of her 6<sup>th</sup> grade year. Life in a former California mining town, the residents' feeling about the bats, and Harriet's conflicts with her fellow students coalesce when she brings a bat to school.

Noguchi, Rick and Deneen Jenks. *Flowers from Mariko*. Illus. by Michelle Reiko Kumata

Lee & Low Books, 2001. Gr. 2-6

A thoughtful picture book portraying one family's return to California after three years in an internment camp during World War II. Mariko's father's truck and gardening tools have disappeared with their former landlord. As her father struggles to reestablish his landscaping business, often frustrated and discouraged, Mariko plants a flower garden reminiscent of the one their family had before the war. When the flowers begin to bloom, they come to symbolize the family's rebirth and hope in the future.

Osborne, Mary Pope. *Earthquake in the Early Morning*.

Random House, 2001. Gr. K-4

Jack and Annie travel to San Francisco in 1906, just in time to experience the great earthquake and firestorm. As usual, Osborne throws in some true facts throughout this Magic Tree House book.

Partridge, Elizabeth. *Oranges on Golden Mountain*.

Dutton Children's Books, 2001. Gr. 2-5

This beautifully told picture book, told from Jo Lee's youthful perspective, depicts the Chinese immigrant experience to California and particularly the San Francisco Bay region in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. You feel his love for family, fear of separation, and hope for a better future when joined by his mother and little sister. The spiritual element of his gentle Hun softens the real loneliness and strange surroundings of his new home. Aki Sogabe's intriguing and colorful cut paper illustrations soar with drama and – like Jo Lee's Hun – a deep desire to connect. Provides details such as the “dancing” on the shrimp that add lots of child appeal.

Paulsen, Gary. *The Voyage of the Frog*.

Orchard Books, 1989. Gr. 6-8

When fourteen-year-old David sails out to sea to scatter his uncle's ashes, he is caught in a fierce storm that pushes him many miles from his home port of Ventura. This gripping survival story describes the ocean life off the California coast. 1990 ALA Notable Book for Children.

Pearce, Jonathan. *The Far Side of the Moon*.

Infinity Pub., 2001. Gr. 6-9

A touching and ultimately fascinating, if not immediately easy, novel about the 77 member Aizu Wakamatsu Colony in Coloma in 1870-71. Having fled civil war in Japan, they tried to start a tea and silkworm farm in partnership with a German immigrant family, only to be faced with overwhelming violence and prejudice on the part of some American miners. This story is told in two voices - Kei, a young Japanese woman and Julius, a young American boy. It's a story that tells of acceptance, perseverance, hard work, personal ethics and strength, of gold rush rowdies, squatters and "foreigners." Some German and Japanese characters are based on real people, as was their attempt to engage in tea and silkworm farming.

Pearson, Gayle. *One Potato, Tu: Seven Stories*.

Atheneum, 1992. Gr. 5-8

Seven inter-related stories set in Oakland introduce thirteen-year-old Lindsay, her family, friends and neighbors. These well-crafted tales reward the reader with plenty of humor, perceptive characterization, and just enough insight to satisfy.

Perez, L. King. *Ghoststalking*.

Carolrhoda Books, 1995. Gr. 4-6

To produce the best science fair project, Chuy convinces his friend Emilio to camp in the Southern California mountains and find the ghost "La Llorona" who grieves for the children she drowned, and then to document their experience. A fun Latino ghost story.

Perkins, Mitali. *The Sunita Experiment*.

Little Brown, 1993. Gr. 7-10

When her grandparents from India come to visit her in Northern California, thirteen-year-old Sunita is caught between cultures and embarrassed by the differences she feels between herself and her friends.

Perrin, Randy. *Time Like a River*.

RDR Books/Orca, 1997. Gr. 5-8

This time-travel novel links a contemporary Jewish-American family in Berkeley with a family of Chinese immigrants during the California Gold Rush period. Teenaged Margie's delving into the diary of a nineteenth-century herbalist as part of a history project leads her to take a fantastic journey into the past - and to the correct diagnosis of the mysterious disease that is killing her mother. This book is a family writing project; Randy Perrin wrote it with his daughters Hannah and Tova.

Petersen, P.J. *Liars*.

Simon & Schuster, 1992. Gr. 6-8

Sam discovers that he is able to detect water underground, and is even more surprised when this power allows him to know when people are lying. When Uncle Gene's prospecting maps become

the object of desire for a mysterious person, Jake finds himself torn between believing his newly discovered power and taking the word of people who he has always trusted. Set in Northern California.

Philbrick, Rodman. *The Journal of Douglas Allen Deeds: The Donner Party Expedition, 1864*. Scholastic, 2001. Gr. 4-8

As he departs from Independence, Missouri in 1846, Deeds, a fictional 15-year old orphan, begins his journal: "Today I embark on a great journey." Traveling across the Great Plains, he forges wild rivers, glimpses buffalo for the first time, traverses mountain ranges and attempts an ill fated short cut through a canyon that uses up precious time. The final third of *The Journal* details the forced encampment at Donner Lake and Deed's grueling journey with a small party to seek help. He avoids witnessing and partaking in cannibalism by running off into the forest, surviving to return with a rescue party. Philbrick provides a realistic account of the most infamous crossing of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range.

Polacco, Patricia. *Chicken Sunday*.

Philomel, 1992. Gr. K-3

Each Sunday Mrs. Eula Steward walks to church with her grandsons Stewart and Winton and their friend, Patricia, and each Sunday, she stops to admire a beautiful hat in Mr. Kodinski's shop along College Avenue in Oakland. When the three children are accused of harassing Mr. Kodinski, they come up with an idea that sets them well on the way to buying the hat for Mrs. Eula as well as clearing their name. This loving story is based on the author's own life in Oakland, where she grew up with Winton and Stewart and shared Mrs. Eula's delicious Sunday chicken dinners. 1993 ALAN Notable Book for Children; 1992 Golden Kite Award.

Polacco, Patricia. *I Can Hear the Sun*.

Philomel, 1996. Gr. K-3

Fondo, a homeless boy, befriends the geese at Lake Merritt in Oakland, especially watching out for the blind goose. When Fondo is to be sent away to a special school, the geese invite Fondo to fly away with them.

Polacco, Patricia. *Tikvah Means Hope*.

Doubleday, 1994. Gr. P-3

After a devastating fire in the hills of Oakland during Sukkoth, a Jewish family and their neighbors find Tikvah the cat a symbol of hope amidst the ashes.

Porter, Tracey. *Treasures in the Dust*.

HarperCollins, 1997. Gr. 5-7

Set in the Great Depression when Oklahoma's Dust Bowl is at its peak, this is the story of two eleven-year-old friends, Violet and Annie. The girls are separated when Violet's family, rather than risk losing their farm to creditors, sets out for California. In alternating chapters, the girls tell their families' stories, describing the hardship of working as migrant farm workers in California and living in the midst of unrelenting dust storms and drought in rural Oklahoma. Hope still endures as their friendship, continued through letters, sustains them. 1999 ALA Best Book for Young Adults.

Poynter, Margaret. *A Time Too Swift*.  
Atheneum, 1990. Gr. 7-10

Living in San Diego in the 1940s, fifteen-year-old Marjorie's romantic view of war is changed when war affects her own family and friends, including a Japanese classmate. The city of San Diego, full of soldiers and sailors and their families, is effectively portrayed. [OP]

Purdy, Carol. *Nesuya's Basket*.  
Roberts Rinehart, 1997. Gr. 6+

The traditional ceremonies, rituals, and prescribed roles for tribal members shape the characters and events in this fictionalized account of one year (1842-1843) in the life of a young Maidu girl. The preface, glossary, and historical notes explain some of the special ways of the Maidu Indians of northern California, such as the cycle of dance ceremonies, the Ostu (burning of valuable articles to honor the dead), and the secret society to honor young males. Part of *The Council for Indian Education* series.

Reeder, Carolyn. *Foster's War*.  
Scholastic Press, 1998. Gr. 5-8

The Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor, and life for Foster Simmons in San Diego is changed forever. As the war effort consumes the neighborhood and the school, Foster struggles to please his authoritarian father and worries about his brother who is now shipped overseas as a gunner on a B-26. While war is waged in Europe and Asia, Foster must fight his own battles on the home front.

Reiss, Kathryn. *Paperquake: A Puzzle*.  
Harcourt Brace, 1998. Gr. 5-8

The odd one out in a set of triplets, Violet has suffered from a heart condition and a fear of earthquakes for as long as she can remember. After the discovery of long-lost love letters from "Hal" to "V" in a 1906 diary, the visions of earthquakes Violet endures grow to parallel what happened during the great San Francisco earthquake. Part mystery, fantasy, history, and romance, this tale weaves through more coincidences and plot twists than San Francisco's famous Lombard Street.

Ritter, John H. *The Boy Who Saved Baseball*.  
Philomel Books, 2003. Gr. 5-8

What happens when the local ragtag summer camp baseball team faces the neighboring all-stars with 320 acres of prime real estate and their town's historic baseball field at stake? Welcome to Dillontown, situated in the mountains east of San Diego. What will it take to win this crucial game and banish the developers in order to retain the town's rural lifestyle? The week before the big game a mysterious boy, Cruz de la Cruz, arrives on horseback with his bat slung across his saddle and a computer game that can mimic any pitch. Cruz's leadership, combined with the coaching ability of former major league player Dante Del Gato, create a suspenseful story told through the eyes of 12-year-old Tom Gallagher. Fast-paced, with play-by-play action and a satisfying ending combine to make this novel a home run.

Robinet, Harriette. *Twelve Travelers, Twenty Horses*.  
Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2003. Gr. 5-8

Meet Jacob Israel Christmas, a thirteen-year-old slave, on the auction block for the third time and sold to “Honorable Mister,” a free-spending adventurer who buys himself ten slaves and plans to take them from Missouri to California on the eve of the 1860 presidential election. Jacob juggles looking out for his mute and seemingly slow but clever young friend, Solomon, hiding the fact that the sale has reunited him with his mother, and trying to stop a plot to steal California’s gold for the Confederacy. Along the way Jacob and his fellow slaves use plenty of initiative and learn to work as a team, first for their kindly but mysterious master, and then for themselves. Young people who are fascinated by quirky characters as well as the interplay between westward expansion and the end of slavery are sure to enjoy this fast and sometimes humorous read.

Robles, Anthony D. *Lakas and the Manilatown Fish / Si Lakas at ang Isdang Manilatown*.

Children’s Book Press, 2003. Gr. K-5

Robles, along with illustrator Carl Angel, delightfully combine a silly and imaginative tale of a talking, kissing fish with vividly colorful and expressive illustrations to introduce to young readers an old San Francisco neighborhood known as Manilatown. Presented in bilingual English-Tagalog languages, the story integrates San Francisco’s rich Philipino past with the present.

Rocklin, Joanne. *Jace the Ace*.

Macmillan, 1990. Gr. 3-5

Jace is still getting used to Los Angeles when he hears a young man discussing a code and is sure he's on the track of a spy. Sequel to *Sonia Begonia*.

Ryan, Pam Munoz. *Esperanza Rising*.

Scholastic, 2000. Gr. 4-YA

With deep pathos, tenderness, and humor, Ryan tells the story of Esperanza, her maternal grandmother. She recalls how her grandmother would cry from remembering how people reached out and helped her and her family through desperate trying times of the Great Depression. In the story, Esperanza (only a child) and her mother must leave Mexico after her father’s murder. With their privileged life behind, they must learn how to become farm workers in the labor camps of Southern California. This may be the first story for young people that tells of the giant sweeps of hundreds of thousands of Mexican farm workers in the 1930s – including some who were U.S. citizens – who were summarily relocated to Mexico as part of a program by California farmers to prevent unionization and keep down wages. 2002 ALA Notable; 2001 ALA Best Book for Young Adults; 2001 Jane Addams Book Award; 2001 Notable Social Studies Trade Book; 2001 ALA Ten Best Books for Young Adults.

Ryan, Pam Munoz. *Riding Freedom*.

Scholastic Press, 1998. Gr. 5-8

A fictionalized account about the daring life of Charlotte Darkey Parkhurst ("One-Eyed Charley"). As a 12-year-old girl, Charlotte disguises herself as a boy to run away from a New Hampshire orphanage, and from then on – until she is dressed for burial – everyone assume she is male. Set during the mid-ninetieth century, Charlotte has many adventures as a stable hand and a coach driver. Along the way, she loses an eye, becomes the first woman to vote, and eventually owns her own California ranch.

Sachs, Marilyn. *At the Sound of the Beep*.

Dutton, 1990. Gr. 5-8

When twins Matthew and Matilda run away from home, they hope to stay with their uncle who lives across the street from San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. In fact, their uncle is away, and they end up living in the park, where the after-dark community of the homeless is being stalked by a murderer. Sachs' knowledge of the setting heightens the realism and tension of the plot.

[OP]

Salat, Cristina. *Living in Secret*.

Bantam, 1993. Gr. 5-7

Amelia runs away from her father and his girlfriend to be with her mother, who was not granted custody. This means changing her name, living with her mother's lesbian lover, and not being around her mother for months while authorities search for her. Living in secret means more than dyeing her hair, pretending to be older, and having a private tutor. It also means handling the strangeness of a new house and new city, having to lie or cover-up with a potential friend, and being very lonely and isolated. Is living in secret worth it? [OP]

Sandoval, Victor M. *Roll Over, Big Toben*.

Pinata, 2003. Gr. 6-10

A touching and uplifting story about David Lopez, a 15-year-old Mexican American, who suffers great loss and sadness in his Los Angeles neighborhood. This is a story of one boy's struggle to break free from the cycle of violence in the barrio.

Santiago, Chiori. *Home to Medicine Mountain*.

Children's Book Press, 1998. Gr. 2-4

The true story of two Maidu Indian brothers sent from their Northern California home to live in a government-run Indian boarding school in Riverside in Southern California. Separated from their family, the boys grow homesick and find life at the strict school dreary. The dark and angular illustrations in the story come to life as we view dreams of the brothers' tribe. After the boys hop on a train and travel the length of California to go back home, they learn a lesson about life, love, and family. 1999 ALA Notable Book for Children.

Savin, Marcia. *The Moon Bridge*.

Scholastic, 1992, Gr. 4-6

Ruthie befriends Mitzi, a Japanese girl, and witnesses the racial hatred in San Francisco at the time of World War II. Separated during the war, the girls maintain their friendship. Written mostly in dialogue, this is good light reading.

Schwartz, Henry. *Albert Goes Hollywood*. Illus. by. Amy Schwartz.

Orchard Books, 1992. Gr. P-K

Albert, the pet dinosaur discovered in Baja, makes movies to help pay his food bills. Amy Schwartz's illustrations highlight this book.

Simmons, Michael. *Pool Boy*.

Roaring Brook Press, 2003. Gr. YA

Life feels perfect for Brent until the police tackle his stockbroker dad in their kitchen, lead him away in handcuffs, and charge him with insider trading and money laundering. Following his dad's conviction, sale of the family home, and move to his great-aunt's house on the other side of the tracks, Brett gets a summer job cleaning pools. How bad can life get? It seemingly hits rock bottom when Brett returns to his former home to clean its pool. By this time, Brett really hates his dad. He questions why his mom stands by his father and puts up a fight when required to visit dad in jail. Through the course of the summer, Brett learns what is really important in life. His friendship with his 70-year-old boss, Alfie, gives him experiences and insights beyond his years. A thought-provoking, contemporary story balanced with humor as Brett discovers the worth of hard work, experiences loss, and learns forgiveness.

Singer, Marilyn. *California Demon*.

Hyperion, 1992. Gr. 5-8

Rosie accidentally releases a nasty little imp who winds up in California where he creates havoc for an unsuspecting family. Snow on the Los Angeles beaches at Christmas time? Someone has to stop this California Demon!

Smith, D. James *The Boys of San Joaquin*.

Atheneum, 2005. Gr. 4-7

Twelve-year-old Paolo discovers more than treasure when his dog Rufus comes running home with a piece of a twenty-dollar bill in his teeth. Just when Paolo and his cousin, Billy, think that they have unearthed the rest of the treasure in the church graveyard, a hand reaches up and grabs Paolo's neck. The search for the buried treasure leads the boys on a rash of scary adventures as they grow up in a small town in the San Joaquin Valley in 1951. [IP, 2006]

Smith, D. James. *Fast Company*.

DK Ink, 1999. Gr. YA

Teenagers Cat, Ozzie, Doug, Karendeep, and Jason are the members of the Ravens rollerblading gang in Whitson, California. Restless, emotionally unsupported, and yearning for a way out of their dusty town, Jason find his life careening out of control as Cat attempts to find direction in her own life.

Smith, Icy. Illustrated by Gayle Garner Roski. *Mei Ling in China City*.

East West Discovery Press, 2008. Gr.1 – 6

Based on a true story of events during World War II in Los Angeles China City, a 12-year old Chinese American girl named Mei Ling Lee was separated from her best friend Yayeko Akiyama when she and her family were interned in the Manzanar War Relocation Center. By writing letters to each other, both young girls described their lives and hardships in China City and Manzanar. This unprecedented children's book depicts the cross-cultural experiences of Americans of Chinese and Japanese ancestry during the war years.

Snyder, Zilpha Keatley. *Cat Running*. (1995 Beatty Award)

Delacorte, 1994. Gr. 5-7

Eleven-year-old Cat is ecstatic when she finds a secret grotto where she can temporarily escape from her troubles at home, but her hideaway is soon discovered by Okie children who are staying

at a camp for dust bowl refugees nearby. Drawn unwillingly into their world, Cat slowly opens her eyes and her heart to them and learns some painful lessons about herself.

Snyder, Zilpha Keatley. *Fool's Gold*.

Delacorte, 1993. Gr. 5-8

Reluctant to admit that he suffers from claustrophobia and anxious not to alienate his friends, Rudy tries to find a way to distract them from pursuing their plan to explore an abandoned gold mine in Northern California.

Sones, Sonya. *One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies*.

Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2004. Gr. YA

Delightful free verse portrays 15-year old Ruby, whose mother has recently died, and who is now forced to move to Hollywood and live with the father she's never known, a well-known actor. She vents her anger and grief at leaving her best friend, boyfriend, and home in biting and poignant prose directed at her father, California (referred to as Caliphonya or Califeelia) and in email to her dead mother. Brilliantly captures the essence of Hollywood's fairy tale glamour, a teenager's angst, and the southern California lifestyle of the rich and famous. Think Francesca Lia Block mixed with Princess Diaries. 2005 ALA Best Book for Young Adults.

Soto, Gary. *Baseball in April and Other Stories*. (1991 Beatty Award)

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990. Gr. 6-8

Gary Soto brings a poet's voice to these short stories about Chicano kids living in the San Joaquin Valley - Alfonso in the agony of first love, Manuel in an unexpected triumph at the school talent show, and Veronica with her fake Barbie doll. These are stories that reassure us about the universality of childhood while reminding us about the uniqueness of a particular cultural heritage. 1996 Pura Belpre Honor.

Soto, Gary. *Buried Onions*.

Harcourt Brace, 1997. Gr. YA

Nineteen-year-old Eddie's father, best friend, and cousin are all dead from brutal incidents in their violence-infested neighborhood of Fresno. Eddie's aunt wants him to avenge his cousin Jesus' murder. Eddie wants a future. This starkly realistic portrait of a young Mexican-American man trying to come to terms with his life in a society where he has little control makes for compelling reading. 1998 ALA Best Book for Young Adults.

Soto, Gary. *Chato's Kitchen*. Illus. by Susan Guevara.

Putnam, 1995. Gr. P-2

Chato is a "low-rider" cat who tries to trick a family of mice who have just moved into his East LA neighborhood into becoming his dinner. Fortunately, the mice have a special friend who innocently saves them. This tale for all ages comes alive with the dramatic illustrations by Susan Guevara. 1996 ALA Notable Book for Children; 1996 Pura Belpre Award; 1995 Tomas Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award.

Soto, Gary. *Crazy Weekend*.

Scholastic, 1994. Gr. 5-8

Hector and his brother Mondo, middle-school kids from East L.A., witness a robbery while they are visiting their uncle in Fresno. Their high-energy behavior contrasts humorously with the somewhat dim-witted robbers.

Soto, Gary. *Help Wanted*.

Harcourt, 2005. Gr. 7-10

In this collection of 10 short stories, Gary Soto explores the lives of young Mexican American teens struggling to find themselves while trying to make sense of the weird people in their world. With humor and insight, the author writes about the oddities of everyday life. Teens like Carolina, who writes to Miss Manners for advice as she dreams of a polite and perfect family, or Daniel, who finds it hard to believe that his loving grandmother who is always so kind and well dressed is wanted for passing bad checks, wrestle with family or cultural issues that will capture the hearts and imaginations of all young teenagers. [IP, 2006]

Soto, Gary. *Jesse*.

Harcourt, 1994. Gr. YA

Seventeen-year-old Jesse leaves home and school and joins his older brother in sharing an apartment and taking college classes in Fresno. They struggle to survive and grow as their lives are affected by poverty, the Vietnam War, and the farm workers' strike.

Soto, Gary. *Off and Running*.

Delacorte, 1996. Gr. 4-7

Rudy and Alex, from Soto's previous books, *The Pool Party* and *Boys at Work*, decide to run in the school election. Their opposition consists of Miata and Ana, from Soto's short novel *The Skirt*.

Soto, Gary. *Petty Crimes*.

Harcourt Brace, 1998. Gr. 5-8

Minor scam artists, shoplifters, bullies and persecuted nice kids populate these sad and humorous stories about Latino teens in the Central Valley whose most serious crime is poverty.

Soto, Gary. *The Pool Party*.

Delacorte, 1993. Gr. 4-6

Ten-year-old Rudy Herrera is excited about an invitation to a pool party from the richest girl in school and he gets advice from his family about how to behave. Set in Central California.

Soto, Gary. *The Skirt*.

Delacorte, 1992. Gr. 3-6

Miata forgets her folklorico skirt on the school bus one Friday afternoon and is forced to take matters into her own hands before Sunday's performance.

Soto, Gary. *Summer on Wheels*. (1996 Beatty Award)

Scholastic, 1995. Gr. 4-6

Hector and Mondo have all kinds of adventures as they travel from their East LA home to the Santa Monica beach, staying with family. From being in a TV commercial to going to a Dodgers game, this sequel to *Crazy Weekend* will delight young readers with the friends' escapades.

Soto, Gary. *Taking Sides*.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991. Gr. 5-8

Lincoln Mendoza moves from San Francisco's Mission District to a middle-class suburb where his classmates are mostly white. He finds his loyalties put to the test when his new junior high plays his old one in basketball. This modern immigrant's journey from resentment and divided loyalties to the small steps that lead to self-knowledge and acceptance will ring true to readers of all backgrounds.

Spinka, Penina Keen. *Mother's Blessing*.

Atheneum, 1992. Gr. 6-8

This prequel to *White Hare's Horses* is set five hundred years earlier and explores the possible beginnings of Chumash mythology. As in the first book, Spinka has done considerable research into Chumash history, but characterizations are unconvincing. [OP]

Spinka, Penina Keen. *White Hare's Horses*.

Atheneum, 1991. Gr. 5-8

Eleven-year-old White Hare belongs to the sixteenth-century Chumash people living in the coastal mountains of California. The story of her fight to awaken the people to the threats of the Aztecs who first bring her people horses is well-researched, but characterization and dialogue are disturbingly contemporary. [OP]

Spurr, Elizabeth. *Mama's Birthday Surprise*.

Hyperion, 1996. Gr. 3-4

A heartwarming story about a Mexican-born widow who is raising her three children in Glendale, California. Mama tells extravagant tales about her Uncle Cesar's wealth and generosity. When her skeptical children insist on going to Guadalajara to meet their uncle, they learn some surprising things about Uncle Cesar.

Stanley, Diane. *Elena*.

Hyperion, 1996. Gr. 4-6

When the Mexican Revolution of 1910 threatens her family in Jalisco, the young and newly widowed Elena follows her beloved husband's directive, and flees across the border to safety in Santa Ana, California. There, her four children grow up as Americans. Most of the action occurs in Mexico in this brief novel based on a true experience.

Staples, Donna. *Arena Beach*.

Houghton Mifflin, 1993. Gr. YA

Seventeen-year-old Terra Bliss, the daughter of an ex-Berkeley hippie who channels, finds that instead of her life focusing on graduating and becoming a full-time auto mechanic, her routine is turned upside down by the arrival of her long-lost father, the pressure from a surfer boyfriend who wants their relationship to become more serious, the demands of her mother who wants Terra to go to college, and the 1989 Northern California earthquake. There's a lot to cover here in a single novel, but Staples does an admirable job, allowing Terra the wisdom to follow her instincts and accept the challenges before her.

Taylor, Theodore. *Maria: A Christmas Story*.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992. Gr. 4-6

Maria vows that her family will have a float in the local Christmas parade, which has traditionally involved only Anglos. Her fight to raise the registration fee and come up with a float is the start of a wonderful tradition for the Mexican- American families in her small Central California town.

Thomas, Rob. *Satellite Down*.

Simon & Schuster, 1998. Gr. YA

Small town high school senior Patrick Sheridan's journalistic skills win him a job as a student reporter with "Classroom Direct", a television news show beamed to classrooms around the country. The move to Los Angeles, life on his own, an assignment in Ireland and the search for his identity demand all the maturity this self-assured teen can muster.

Uchida, Yoshiko. *The Bracelet*.

Philomel, 1993. Gr. 3-6

Emi, a Japanese-American girl in the second grade, is sent with her family to an internment camp during World War II, but the loss of the bracelet her best friend gave her proves that she does not need a physical reminder of that friendship. Set in Northern California. 1993 New York Time Best Illustrated Book.

Van Draanen, Wendelin. *Sammy Keyes and the Hollywood Mummy*.

Alfred A. Knopf, 2001. Gr. 4-8

When Sammy and her sidekick, Marissa, set out for Hollywood in search of Sammy's mother, a wanna-be Hollywood actress, they do not find much glamour. But they do solve the mysterious murder of an actress who had been competing with Sammy's mother for an important role. Doesn't give much of the local color of Hollywood, but it does give a haunting portrait of the lengths to which young women will go to get into the movie business. Another first-rate treat with Sammy!

Van Raven, Pieter. *A Time of Troubles*.

Scribners, 1990. Gr. 6+

A powerful picture of California in the 1930s and of a troubled father/son relationship, this book describes Rod and Harlow's journey from the East Coast to California, where the promises they have followed turn into the prejudice and strikes portrayed for adults in Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. 1991 Scott O'Dell Award. [OP]

Walter, Virginia. *Making Up Megaboy*.

DK Ink, 1998. Gr. YA

When thirteen-year-old Robbie shoots an old man in a liquor store, everyone who knows the quiet, withdrawn youth struggles to understand his act of seemingly random violence. It is suspected that there must be something here that no one else sees. Who, for instance, is Megaboy? 1999 ALA Notable Book for Children; 1999 ALA Best Book for Young Adults.

West, Tracey. *Fire in the Valley*.

Silver Moon Press, 1993. Gr. 2-4

Twelve-year-old Sarah's feelings about life on her family's Central Valley farm change when she writes a letter to President Teddy Roosevelt to protest diverting water for use by the growing city of Los Angeles and when she saves her twin brother from a fire.

Williams, Sherley Anne. *Working Cotton*. Illus. by Carole Byard.  
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992. Gr. K-4

This poem tells of an African-American family picking cotton not in the South, but in the Central Valley of California. (Only the book jacket mentions California.) The poem is illustrated with stunning paintings by Carole Byard. 1993 Caldecott Honor; 1993 Coretta Scott King Honor.

Wilson, Diane Lee. *Black Storm Comin'*.  
Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2005. Gr. 6-10

Set in the 1860s, this exciting story of a mixed-race boy who hides his background to become a pony express rider gives the reader a good feel for the pony express route through the Sierra Nevada Mountains in this story of tragedy, suspense, moral dilemmas, and hair raising rides. Young Colton leaves behind his younger sisters and his sick mother in a race against time as he rides the dangerous route through the Eastern Sierra to deliver mail to the outlying posts and freedom papers to his aunt in Sacramento. [IP, 2006]

Wolff, Ashley. *Stella and Roy*.  
Dutton, 1993. Gr. P

Even though Stella's bike is much faster than Roy's, he manages to win their race around the park because she keeps stopping to enjoy its natural beauty. Set in Northern California.

Wolff, Ashley. *Stella & Roy Go Camping*.  
Dutton, 1999. Gr. K-3

Stella identifies the many animal tracks Roy finds on their family's backpacking trip in the Sierra Mountains, but it's Roy who sees the surprise visitor that night.

Wong, Angi Ma. *Night of the Red Moon*.  
Pacific Heritage Books, 1994. Gr. 4-6

A stiffly written, but historically interesting, novel about a Chinese immigrant tong war and European America's reaction to it.

Wood, Audrey. *The Bunyans*. Illus. by David Shannon.  
Blue Sky, 1996. Gr. K-3

In this original tall tale, Paul Bunyan has married a giantess and they have two giant children. Just by accident, they create many of America's natural wonders, including California's Big Sur. Illustrated by David Shannon.

Woods, Brenda. *Emako Blue*.  
G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2004. Gr. YA

Emako, talented, beautiful, and determined, should have been a star, but will never have that opportunity. Four classmates reveal in alternating chapters how their brief relationship with Emako made a difference in their lives. Each scene, from East Los Angeles to Melrose Ave. and

Rodeo Drive, vividly depicts Los Angeles and its distinct neighborhoods. Each character is memorable in this short and poignant memorial.

Yee, Paul. *Tales from Gold Mountain: Stories of the Chinese in the New World*.

Macmillan, 1990. Gr. 4-8

These eight original stories based on Chinese immigrant experiences in the United States and Canada include several set in California. [OP]

Yep, Laurence. *The Amah*.

G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1999. Gr. 4-6

Amy Chin finds parallels in her stage role as Cinderella's stepsister and her own San Francisco home life when her mother accepts a new job as a Chinese nanny.

Yep, Laurence. *Angelfish*.

G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2001.

Set in contemporary San Francisco's Chinatown and Richmond District, this installment of the Ribbons series deals with the Chinese Cultural Revolution and with the emotional aspects of being biracial. Robin, a young Chinese-American, and old Mr. Tsow, an old Chinese immigrant, have a developing friendship, which helps them better understand each other, and helps us understand them. Well written and compelling.

Yep, Laurence. *The Case of the Firecrackers*.

HarperCollins, 1999. Gr. 4-6

In this latest installment of Yep's *Chinatown* series, 12-year-old Lily Lew, her older brother Chris, and her great-aunt Tiger Lil, a movie actress turned employment agent, solve a mystery when a prop gun is replaced by a real gun during the filming of a popular television show in Chinatown.

Yep, Laurence. *The Case of the Goblin Pearls*.

HarperCollins, 1997. Gr. 4-7

Lily's aunt, a Chinese-American movie star, seems to confuse herself with her alter ego, the action heroine Tiger Lil. When the priceless Goblin Pearls are stolen during the Chinese New Year parade, Lily and her aunt find themselves thrown into a suspenseful and possibly deadly case that also leads them into the discovery of an illegal sweatshop operation in San Francisco's Chinatown. Yep gives readers a glimpse of life in Chinatown that tourists never see, all wrapped up nicely in a mystery motif.

Yep, Laurence. *The Case of the Lion Dance*.

HarperCollins, 1998. Gr. 5-8

An extravaganza is arranged for the opening of the Wok Inn restaurant, with firecrackers, a lion dance competition, a \$2,000 donation to charity, and lots of good food. During the event however, the money is stolen, and Lily and her movie-star aunt set out to find the thief. As they search San Francisco's Chinatown for clues, readers are taken from grimy alleyways, to flashy nightclubs, following a trail of extortion notes, fake addresses, and counterfeit money.

Yep, Laurence. *Cockroach Cooties*.

Hyperion, 2000. Gr. 3-6

Set in San Francisco's present Chinatown, Laurence Yep dishes up a delightful take on brothers and their peculiarities. Teddy "didn't believe in that brotherly love stuff....Frankly, I think it's overrated. However, there was one part of brotherhood I took seriously....Nobody could do serious damage to my little brother except me." Bobby is crazy about cockroaches! They have a private war against Arnie, an immigrant kid and bully who is repeating second grade but stars in Chinese language school and likes Godzilla. Like his hero, Arnie is big and clumsy and nobody explains the rules to him. But, the brothers discover, he's not a monster. "Just another human being. Like us." It's a funny, great read-aloud.

Yep, Laurence. *The Cook's Family*.

Putnam Publishing Group, 1998. Gr. 5-8

As her parents' arguments become more frequent, Robin looks forward to visits she and her grandmother make to San Francisco's Chinatown. At a restaurant in Chinatown they visit a sad and lonely cook and reluctantly agree to pretend to be his lost family. During these visits to Cook's restaurant, Robin gets a glimpse of a new side to her grandmother, and also discovers a sense of her own Chinese heritage.

Yep, Laurence. *Dragon's Gate*. (1994 Beatty Award)

HarperCollins, 1993. Gr. 6-10

When he accidentally kills a Manchu, a Chinese boy is sent to America to join his father, an uncle, and other Chinese immigrants working to build a tunnel for the transcontinental railroad through the Sierra Nevada in 1867. 1994 ALA Notable Book for Children; 1994 Newbery Honor.

Yep, Laurence. *The Imp That Ate My Homework*.

HarperCollins, 1998. Gr. 5-8

Yep has combined Chinese legend with modern life in San Francisco's Chinatown to create a light-hearted fantasy of adventure, charm and wit. Jim's grandfather is the meanest man in Chinatown and Jim's homework assignment is to write about him. But when an imp eats his homework, the only ally Jim can find to rid himself of the trickster is his feared Grandpop, whose wily ways match the mischievous imp trick-for-trick, evoking memories of the legendary Chinese ghostbuster, Chung Kuei.

Yep, Laurence. *The Journal of Wong Ming-Chung: A Chinese Miner*.

Scholastic, 2000. Gr. 4-8

In 1852 a twelve-year-old boy from southern China travels to California to help his uncle mine for gold. Through cunning and perseverance, the Fox and his mining crew succeed despite prejudice and a harsh physical environment. An historical note with archival images supplements this novel rich in details of Chinese culture.

Yep, Laurence. *Later, Gator*.

Disney Publications, 1995. Gr. 4-6

Set in San Francisco's Chinatown, Teddy gives his "perfect" brother Bobby a gag gift of a baby alligator which causes all kinds of uproar in their household. As they both grow to love the alligator, they discover themselves growing closer.

Yep, Laurence. *Ribbons*.

Putnam, 1996. Gr. 4-7

Robin has to stop ballet lessons because her parents need the money to bring Robin's grandmother from Hong Kong to San Francisco. When her grandmother moves into her home, Robin is bitterly resentful, until she learns about her grandmother's bound feet.

Yin. *Coolies*. Illus. by Chris Soentpiet

Philomel Books, 2001. Gr. 1-6

Showing the contribution of Chinese laborers to the transcontinental railroad, Yin tells a story not often told in a picture book format: the journey of two brothers, refugees from southern China, who come to California. In search of work to feed their starving families back home, they encounter harsh, back-breaking working conditions. The illustrations in this book glow, using both intimacy (the boys writing in the tent by candlelight or being lowered in baskets to set the dynamite), and sweeping vistas of railroad construction to show this story of huge communal effort and sacrifices. Author's note and bibliography included. 2002 ALA Notable Book for Children.