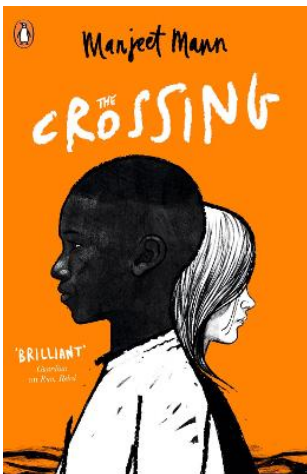


The Glorumptious Worlds of Roald Dahl

Author: Stella Caldwell **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 16/09/2021
Year Groups: Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3

October 2021 Book of the Month | A Julia Eccleshare Pick of the Month October 2021 For all those who are already fans of Roald's Dahl's awesome stories and for newcomers to them, this is a splendid introduction to some of the favourite characters and the most dramatic, hilarious, spinechilling and adventuresome stories that are his storytelling legacy. Following a brief account of Roald Dahl's childhood and his famous writing shed, 15 of his top titles are cleverly explored through their main characters and the key features of the stories. There is James and his extraordinary crew from the awesome travelling peach in James and the Giant Peach; the delightful Charlie Bucket whose winning ticket takes him to Mr Wonka's astonishing chocolate factory and a heap of adventures with some less lovely children including Veruca Salt and Augustus Gloop; the delightful Danny and his father and some fabulous pheasant poaching plots and the truly horrible Mr and Mrs Twit who have a whole book to themselves. The battle between Matilda and the awful Miss Trunchbull, the BFG's encounter with the Queen and the utterly terrifying Witches - all of these and more are brought to life in these brief retellings which make clever use of letters, recipes and newspaper clippings. As in the originals, all are fabulously illustrated by Quentin Blake. The inclusion of an activity pack adds an interactive element to the book and enhances enjoyment of it.



The Crossing

Author: Manjeet Mann **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/06/2021
Year Groups: Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4

The premise of this fascinating book is two teenagers from opposite sides of the world who form a connection through odd circumstances. Natalie has just lost her Mum to cancer and struggles to find a calm place in the world, whilst her brother reacts by rebelling and joining a hate filled far right anti-refugee protest and action group. Sammy has had to leave his home in Eritrea on the chance of a new life in Europe - running from conscription into the army - which is a form of slavery in his home country. Both characters have huge issues to face. Sammy's seem more obviously dangerous and overwhelming, though Natalie's are equally as difficult - without the imminent danger. Told through a narrative poem using both voices to alternately express their fears, dilemmas and friendships this is a book you really can't put down. You have to know if Sammy and Natalie do get to meet. As the plot carries you along you also want to know more about the plight of refugees and the horrific characters that exploit them in many many ways. Natalie's decision to swim the channel to raise funds for the refugee charities creates a counterpoint in the narrative. The detail of her struggles and training plan seem an unlikely text for poetry - but it

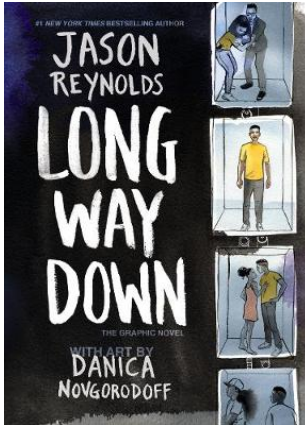
works! The author says “I wanted to make sense of what I was seeing, I wanted to do something that would help build empathy and understanding.” She has most emphatically succeeded in this aim. This is such a profound story of hope, grief, and strength - I do recommend it to all. Be aware you will weep, too.



Gut Feelings

Author: C. G. Moore **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/01/2021
Year Groups: Key Stage 4

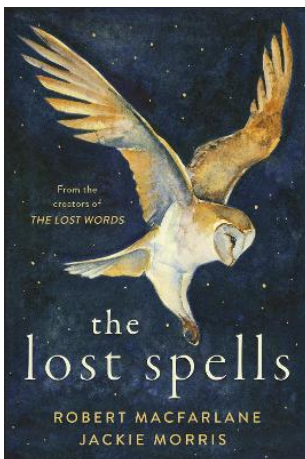
Selected for The Book Box by LoveReading4Kids From the author of *Fall Out*, *Gut Feelings* is a powerful autobiographical novel-in-verse charting a boy's life-changing operation at the age of eleven through to his hopeful young adulthood as a gay man. Sure to be enjoyed by fans of Sarah Crossan and Dean Atta's *The Black Flamingo*, it's both beautifully written and easy to read, with an impactful, unsentimental voice. There's no self-pity here, despite the harrowing nature of what he endures. Diagnosed with FAP (Familial adenomatous polyposis, a rare genetic condition in which a person develops precancerous polyps in the large intestine), Chris must have a total colectomy. His state of fear, isolation and loneliness is palpable as he describes the enemas and bedsores, and the morphine which evaporates his “maelstrom of fears, failures, social pressures”. Recovering in hospital, well-meaning visitors “have no idea what it's like/To be confined to this prison, Bars lining the windows, Double glazing boxing me in - These familiar faces have/No idea how to reach me”. Then, once home, he feels abandoned: “The surgery has fixed me - I'm no longer worthy/Of attention and support.” And this isn't the first time Chris has experienced adversity, for alongside the direct, detached exposition of his present-day existence, we learn of Chris's troubled background - the father who had a debilitating stroke, the school peers who bullied him. Then, in time, through the darkest of days, comes a turning point when he realises that “Some will accept me, Some will reject me/But I must learn to love myself Because I am done with fitting in” and he shifts towards renewal and hope - “I'll keep writing, Keep learning/Until I am/Free to embrace Who I am.” Illuminating on living with chronic invisible illness, this story lingers long in the soul, and special mention must go to the book's design and layout, with letters and words perfectly positioned as visual markers of emotional states. Find more books with Positive Images of Disability.



Long Way Down The Graphic Novel

Author: Jason Reynolds **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 19/11/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4

Shortlisted for the CILIP Carnegie Medal 2019, Jason Reynolds's original Long Way Down novel-in-verse (stunningly illustrated by Chris Priestley) has here been adapted into a glorious graphic novel. The story is as gripping and moving as ever, its atmosphere perhaps even more poignant courtesy of Danica Novgorodoff's impactful watercolour illustrations. It's an incredibly poignant story about breaking the cycles of brutal gang culture that will surely now find an even bigger audience. Two days ago fifteen-year-old Will witnessed the fatal shooting of his big brother. The initial smart of his grief is evoked with characteristic cut-to-the-point lyricism, hauntingly portrayed in a murky, lilac-hued street scene: "When bad things happen, we can usually look up and see the moon, big and bright, shining over us. But when Shawn died, the moon was off." Tragically, Will knows the drill in these situations - no crying, no snitching, take revenge. "The Rules weren't meant to be broken. They were meant for the broken to follow," so Will gets his brother's gun and heads into the elevator to exact revenge on Shawn's murderer. But at each level Will encounters figures from his past, among them his friend Buck who died last year, Dani who was shot in a playground, his Uncle Mark, his father. So many lives lost to violence, and their reappearance causes Will to think; to question his plans and question the rules.

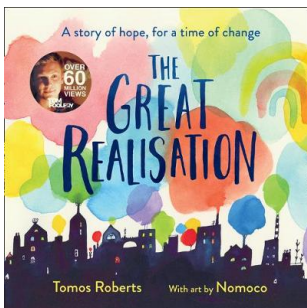


The Lost Spells

Author: Robert MacFarlane and Jackie Morris **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 01/10/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4

The duo that produced the cultural phenomenon that took the publishing world by storm in 2017, winning awards and sparking dozens of fundraising campaigns to get The Lost Words into every primary school, have now produced a book very different in form, but absolutely kindred in spirit and every bit as essential a purchase. This is a pocket-sized treasure containing twenty-one new 'spells'- poems inspired by the natural world around us. These animals, birds, trees and flowers may be relatively common but are often underappreciated and ignored. Whereas The Lost Words had a formal triptych structure to its spells, this collection is freer and ranges from celebratory to elegiac and sorrowful. As the introduction says "Loss is the tune of our age, hard to miss and hard to bear.... But there has always been singing in dark times—and wonder is needed now more than ever." Acrostic poems with the letters picked out in gold, feature most in this collection, as does the poet's amazing facility with kennings and descriptive word play shown to great comic effect in Woodpecker "Chisel-gouger, head-banger, bark-stripper, nerve-shredder" Structured as a dialogue with badger one can see how much this lends itself to reading and

performing aloud as indeed is the author's intention with all the collection. The lyrical consonant tones or staccato beats of these beautiful spells is absolutely matched by the harmonious fluidity of the watercolour images that grace each page. From the challenging gaze of the red fox to the eyelike whorls of silver birch bark to the balletic wings of the swift wrapping around the words, the images fix the words indelibly into your mind. Lockdown saw a widespread recognition of the necessity for contact with the natural world to maintain health and well-being. This book is the perfect walking companion with a glossary identifying each species depicted, allowing this small but powerful book to do double-duty as an artful field guide. As Macfarlane writes In Goldfinch, apparently composed while sitting at his grandmother's deathbed, "God knows the world needs all the good it can get right now".



The Great Realisation

Author: Tomos Roberts **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 03/09/2020
Year Groups: Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3

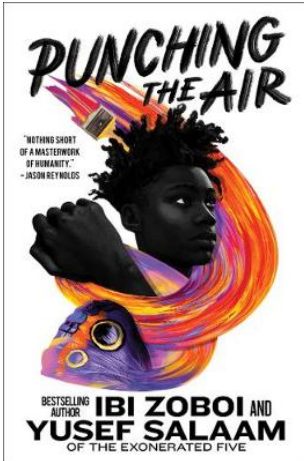
The Post-Pandemic Poem That Has Captured the Hearts of Millions Written in the form of a bedtime story, The Great Realisation is a celebration of the many things - from simple acts of kindness, to applauding the heroic efforts of our key workers - that have brought us together at a time of global crisis. It has captured, with magical resonance, the thoughts and feelings of millions in lockdown, as we adapt to a new way of life, find joy in unexpected places, cast aside old habits and reflect on what truly matters to us.



SLAM! You're Gonna Wanna Hear This

Author: Nikita Gill **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/09/2020
Year Groups: Key Stage 3

Shortlisted for the CLIPPA (CLPE Children's Poetry Award) 2021 Nikita Gill brings together exciting new poets, all well known to poetry audiences but many making their first appearance in print; the judges hail this as a book to excite young people about all the potential of poetry, curated with skill and passion.

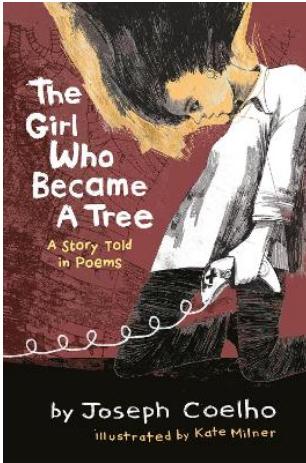


Punching the Air

Author: Ibi Zoboi, Yusef Salaam **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/09/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 4

Longlisted for the UKLA Book Award 2022 ages 11-14 |

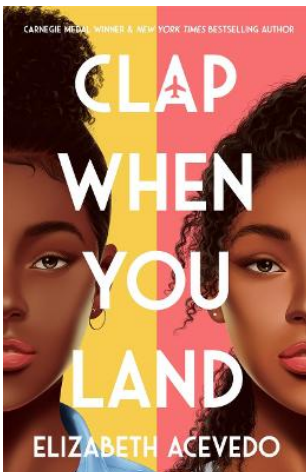
September 2020 Book of the Month Co-written by award-winning novelist Ibi Zoboi and Dr Yusef Salaam, a prison reform activist, poet and one of the Exonerated Five, *Punching the Air* is a timely, heartachingly powerful free verse novel. Through its shatteringly succinct lyricism, Amal's story is a mighty call to action that rouses readers to question the deep-rooted and damaging consequences of racially biased societal systems, while radiating the light and hope of art and Amal himself. Sixteen-year-old Amal is a talented poet and artist, but even at his liberal arts college, he's victimised by destructive preconceptions, deemed disruptive by people who "made themselves a whole other boy in their minds and replaced me with him." Amal's budding life careers off-course when he's wrongfully convicted of a crime in a gentrified area. Even in the courtroom it feels to him "like everything that I am, that I've ever been, counts as being guilty". Standing before judgemental eyes in his specially chosen grey suit, he's aware that "no matter how many marches or Twitter hashtags or Justice for So-and-So our mind's eyes and our eyes' minds see the world as they want to/Everything already illustrated in black and white." In the detention centre, Amal considers his African ancestry: "I am shackled again," he says. "Maybe these are the same chains that bind me to my ancestors. Maybe these are the same chains that bind me to my father and my father's father and all the men that came before." He expresses society's double standards with searing clarity too - Black boys are "a mob/a gang ghetto/a pack of wolves animals/thugs hoodlums men" while white boys "were kids having fun home loved supported protected full of potential boys." But through the beatings and despair, through anger and frustration, Amal finds solace in the supportive letters he receives from a girl in his school, and his "poet, educator and activist" teacher. By turns soul-stirring and inspiring, this sharp exposure of injustice and testament to the transformative power of art comes highly recommended for readers who love the work of Jason Reynolds and Elizabeth Acevedo. Find a selection of recommended books that celebrate difference in our blog, *Diverse Voices*.



The Girl Who Became a Tree

Author: Joseph Coelho **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 27/08/2020
Year Groups: Key Stage 3

Longlisted for the UKLA Book Award 2022 ages 11-14 | Shortlisted for CILIP Carnegie Medal 2021 Joseph Coelho is a poet who has been in the situation of 'the one to watch' because he has been producing lots of wonderful work that has made an impact from picture books to teen reads. This is his most ground-breaking and powerful exploration of poetry as a form and as a story-telling medium to date. Based on the legend of Daphne - she was a Naiad-nymph who was loved by the god Apollo who pursued her until she grew exhausted and called on Gaia for help. She was transformed into a laurel tree which Apollo then adopted as his sacred plant. This creates a clever and intriguing interweaving of the ancient legend with the reaction and feelings of a girl, also called Daphne, who is coping with the grief caused by the loss of her father. She turns to her phone for aid, and her local library as she tries to sort out the past and find a way to build connections again. The verse is heart-breaking, powerful, totally involving, and engrossing to read. The layers of meaning enlighten the story in this rich poetic exploration - a tour de force - full of energy and a rich palette of language. This is not to disregard the evocative and powerful illustrations from one of our most innovative and prize-winning illustrators to add stylish, edgy and thought-provoking illustrations. The whole package is an experience that will cause discussion and deep thought in every reader.

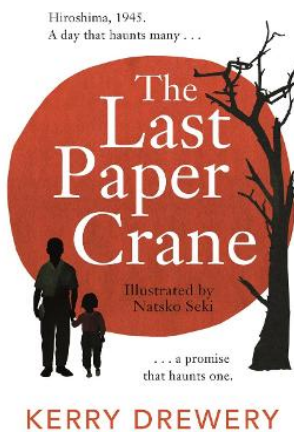


Clap When You Land

Author: Elizabeth Acevedo **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 05/05/2020
Year Groups: Key Stage 4

Shortlisted for CILIP Carnegie Medal 2021 - Shortlisted for the UKLA Book Awards 2021 From the multi-award-winning author of *The Poet X* and *With the Fire on High* comes Elizabeth Acevedo's exceptional dual-voiced novel about loss, love and sisterhood across the sea, a story partly sparked by the fatal crash of a flight from NYC to Santo Domingo in 2001. Camino Rios has always lived in the Dominican Republic with her aunt Tia, "a woman who speaks to the dead, who negotiates with spirits", a woman who's like a mother to her: "Even when Mama was alive, Tia was the other mother of my heart." Life's not easy for them on the island, but they have it better than their neighbours as a result of Camino's beloved Papi working in the US for most of year. To Camino, Papi is a "A king who built an empire so I'd have a throne to inherit", and she lives for the summer months when he comes home to them. But all life is thrown into terrible disarray when she goes to meet Papi at the airport and learns that his plane has fallen from the sky, and then: "I am swallowed by this shark-toothed truth." This story is blessed with such divinely piercing language throughout. At the same time, across the Atlantic, Yahaira Rios learns that her hero

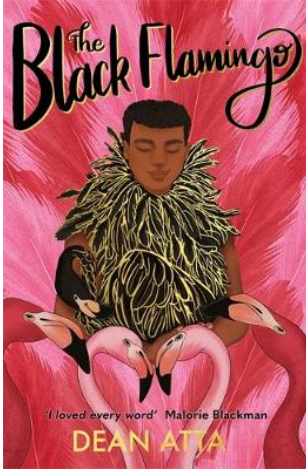
Papi has died in a plane crash. She already knew he had a wife on the island (but not of his secret daughter), and has always longed to reconcile her Dominican heritage with her American life: "Can you be from a place you have never been? You can find the island stamped all over me, but what would the island find if I was there? Can you claim a home that does not know you, much less claim you as its own?" When it emerges that Papi wishes to be buried back in DR, Yahaira's Mami insists that she will never let her "touch foot on the sands of that tierra." But Yahaira has other plans, not least when she's contacted by a girl named Camino Rios who bears an undeniable resemblance to Papi, and to her too. As well as being exceptionally affecting on grief, forgiveness and family secrets, *Clap When You Land* is also devastatingly sharp on the exploitative tendencies of tourism. In Camino's words: "I am from a playground place...Our land, lush and green, is bought and sold to foreign powers so they can build luxury hotels...Even the women, girls like me, our mothers and tias, our bodies are branded jungle gyms...Who reaps? Who eats? Not us. Not me." Overflowing with truths of the heart, and truths about inequalities that need to be broken, while also addressing the complexities of what it means to be of a place, I can't praise this highly enough.



The Last Paper Crane

Author: Kerry Drewery **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/04/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 4

Joint Winner the UKLA Book Awards 2021 This novel moves from poetry to prose, and back again, as it explores a girl's relationship with her Grandfather. Mizuki can see something is deeply troubling to her Grandfather Ichiro, but she can't find its source, except it is somehow connected with an old book and Ichiro's need to create origami paper cranes from it. Mizuki's worries are expressed in verse before we jump back into prose - to the at times brutal description of the day the bomb fell on Hiroshima and Ichiro's role in that day and beyond. The descriptions of the effects of the bomb are based on effective research and from survivor's tales and told in such a way that the reader is entirely there in the moment and the long days after as Hiro rebuilds a life for himself. As we return to Japan in 2018 the novel reverts to poetry to the very modern tale of how Mizuki uses the internet to try to get to the bottom of the problem facing her elderly grandfather. The illustrations in the book help create the many impressions and emotions aroused by the story - they are based on Japanese brush and ink techniques and add a further layer to this already impressive book. This is a harrowing tale but the ultimate redemption in the story leaves one with a sense of hope. Highly recommended.



The Black Flamingo

Author: Dean Atta **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 05/03/2020

Year Groups: Key Stage 4

Longlisted for the UKLA Book Awards 2021 | Shortlisted for the CILIP Carnegie Medal 2020 | May 2020 Debut of the Month | Winner of the Stonewall Book Award | Shortlisted for the Jhalak Prize 2020 Uplifting and dazzlingly unique, this coming-of-age treasure explores identity and sexuality with an emboldening message to remember that “you have the right to be you”. As a young Barbie-loving boy, mixed race Michael wonders if he’s “only half” of everything, to which his mother poignantly replies: “Don’t let anyone tell you/that you are half-black/and half-white. Half-Cypriot/ and half-Jamaican./ You are a full human being.” But he doesn’t feel like a whole human being. Dubbed a “queerdo and weirdo” by bullies and subjected to “batty bwoy” taunts through his teenage years, he leaves London for Brighton University with hope in his heart. But even here Michael feels “like Goldilocks; trying to find a group of people/the perfect fit for me”. He doesn’t feel black enough for the Caribbean Society, or Greek enough for Hellenic Society, or queer enough for the LBGT Society. Then Michael finally finds a fit at Drag Society where he becomes The Black Flamingo, “someone fabulous, wild and strong. With or without a costume on.” Michael’s journey is complex, moving and told with a raw vitality that makes the soul soar and the heart sing, with Anshika Khullar’s magnificent illustrations and the smart design adding further depth, prompting the reader to pause for thought as his story requires.