



The Reading Chair

Illustration by Diane Greenseid

In this issue, we're focusing on the year's Caldecott winners and four other books.

Caldecott Books 2010

***The Lion & the Mouse*, by Jerry Pinkney. 2009. New York: Little, Brown. 32 pp. ISBN 9780316013567. Ages 3 to 7.**

***All the World*, by Liz Garton Scanlon. Illustrations by Marla Frazee. 2009. New York: Beach Lane Books. 40 pp. ISBN 9781416985808. Ages 2 to 5.**

***Red Sings from Treetops: A Year in Colors*, by Joyce Sidman. Illustrated by Pamela Zagarenski. 2009. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 32 pp. ISBN 9780547014944. Ages 4 to 8.**

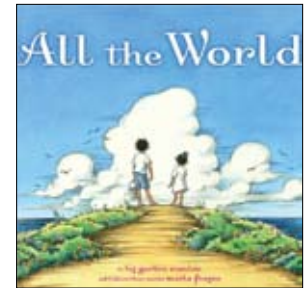
Most of us have run our fingers over the gold and silver medallions that grace the covers of some picture books. These are the Caldecott seals—gold for the Medal winner and silver for Honor Books. They are awarded each year by the American Library Association to the artists of American picture books for children, primarily based on the illustrations. Announced earlier this year, *The Lion & the Mouse* won the Caldecott Medal for 2010. *All the World* and *Red Sings from Treetops* received Caldecott Honors.



In *The Lion & the Mouse*, Pinkney retells Aesop's fable about the lion who spares a mouse and is later saved by him. The story is portrayed with no text other than the animal sounds heard in the African Serengeti, which serves as the book's setting. Pinkney's illustrations of pencil, watercolor, and colored pencil in browns, yellows, greens, and grays bring intensity to the silent story and, as all wordless books do, invite children to supply the words and develop their own storytelling skills.

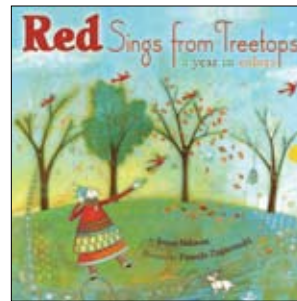


In *All the World*, Scanlon's spare poetic text and Frazee's double-page spreads about a family's day capture the majesty of nature within small moments, like shopping at the farm stand, climbing a tree, and dodging the rain. Even small children think about their place in the world, and



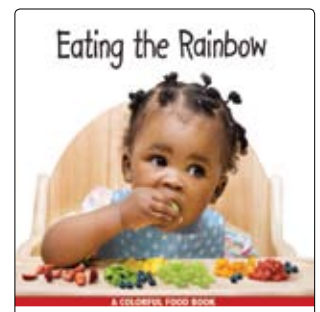
this book will make readers feel at home.

Red Sings from Treetops is a sophisticated book of poetry for older children. In it, the seasons are described by the colors found in nature in each phase of the year.



***Eating the Rainbow*, by Rena D. Grossman. 2009. Long Island City, NY: Star Bright Books. 18 pp. ISBN 9781595721747. Ages birth to 3.**

Who can resist the baby on the cover of this book? Inside, nutritious foods are grouped by color and are shown being eaten by a multicultural cast of babies, including a set of twins. The first spread, for example, captures a baby eating a red pepper opposite pictures of four other red foods: apple, raspberry, strawberry, and tomato. Other delicious treats that pop off the



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This column appears in an online archive at www.naeyc.org/yc/columns.

page in vibrant colors include pink guava, bright white coconut flesh in its brown shell, and purple figs. If only healthy foods were always marketed to children so well!

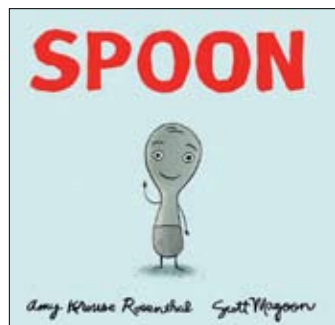
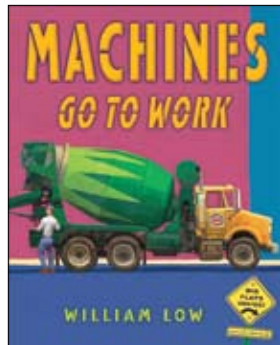
The original photos of a baby eating whole grapes, which are a choking hazard, were replaced this spring with photos of cut grapes. The photos are clear and set against clean white backgrounds. Children will recognize familiar foods such as broccoli and apples while learning about new foods such as litchis and peas still in their pods.

***Machines Go to Work*, by William Low. 2009. New York: Henry Holt. 28 pp. ISBN 9780805087598. Ages 2 to 6.**

This book about vehicles on the move features full-page foldouts that lend a sense of anticipation about what the vehicles will accomplish next. Machines include a backhoe digging a hole to plant a tree, a fire truck hoisting a fireman who saves a kitten, and a tugboat leading a large container ship through a narrow passage. A double-page spread with two foldouts at the end shows a bird's-eye view of the entire city, inviting children to locate each of the vehicles they've just read about.

Excellent sound effects ("WA-PA-PA-PA . . ." for the helicopter; "PSSSSSS . . ." when a nail punctures the cement mixer's tire; "Gzzzzzzzzzk!" for the backhoe moving its arm and putting its stabilizers down) make this a particularly engaging read-aloud. Rendered in what appear to be thick brushstrokes of acrylic paint, the rich and colorful illustrations are actually computer-based art.

While machine books are underrepresented on many classroom bookshelves, they are beloved by many young readers and can be helpful for engaging reluctant readers at story time. An inventory at the end of the book offers more details about the machines and a small illustration of each machine with various parts identified (smoke stack, cement drum, spotlight).



***Spoon*, by Amy Krouse Rosenthal. Illustrated by Scott Magoon. 2009. New York: Hyperion. 32 pp. ISBN 9781423106852. Ages 3 to 6.**

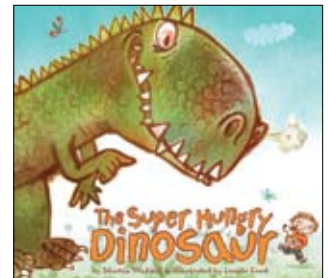
This book's author and illustrator reveal a good sense of humor through an unconventional plot:

a young spoon is jealous of the other utensils in the drawer. "All my friends have it so much better than me," he laments. Knife gets to cut and spread. Fork gets to dive headfirst into a piece of cake. Everyone thinks chopsticks are really cool. With a lighthearted touch, the book addresses important family, social, and emotional issues such as self-esteem, jealousy, and belonging. Rosenthal wastes no words and successfully brings little Spoon's feelings to life.

Two highlights from Magoon's illustrations are Spoon using sugar packets as pillows and the Spoon family portrait, featuring a ladle, slotted spoons, wooden spoons, and measuring spoons. This family portrait is a great jumping-off point for extending the book in the classroom. Review the vocabulary for various utensils, such as the spoons mentioned above, and ask children to bring in different spoons from their own kitchens.

***The Super Hungry Dinosaur*, by Martin Waddell. Illustrated by Leonie Lord. 2009. New York: Dial Books. 32 pp. ISBN 9780803734463. Ages 3 to 6.**

This peppy tension-filled story covers it all: manners, dealing with a bully, childhood fears, and superhero fantasies. When confronted in his own backyard by a Super Hungry Dinosaur looking for a meal, the book's young hero, Hal, has to teach the oversized bully some etiquette before the dinosaur eats up Hal's family. At first, the dinosaur gives chase to Hal and his petite canine sidekick. But soon the heroic duo wrestle the dinosaur, tie him up, and lay down some rules: before they'll release the threatening beast, he must agree to clean up the mess he's made of the yard, apologize, and promise not to eat Hal's mom, dad, and dog.



The dinosaur reforms himself and follows through, but he's still super hungry. So, before sending him on his way, Hal's mom makes him a huge plate of spaghetti and meatballs. Despite his slurping and burping, the dinosaur has the good sense to say, "Thank you so much," winning himself an invitation to come back soon.

Martin Waddell's well-paced text pairs nicely with new illustrator Leonie Lord's energy-packed illustrations. Lord captures the romance of crayon drawings of childhood but also delivers the subtlety of a skilled artist.

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