

CSLA 2020 Book List/Healing Power of YA Fiction

Marilyn Reynolds, M.S., Reading Education
Author, True-to-Life Series from Hamilton High and
I Won't Read and You Can't Make Me: Reaching Reluctant Teen Readers

Abuse

A Child Called It, also *A Man Named Dave*, Dave Pelzer

Baby Help, Marilyn Reynolds

Bullying

Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass, Meg Medina. Piddy Sanchez becomes the focus of bullying because she isn't Latina enough to suit Yaqui Delgado.

Cultural/Racial Diversity

Does My Head Look Big in This?, Rand Abdel-Fatah. When sixteen-year-old Amal decides to wear the hijab full-time, her entire world changes.

A Very Large Expanse of Sea. Tahereh Mafi. Cultural, "own voice text" of Muslim experience

I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter. Erika Sanchez

Stargazing, Jen Wang. Asian American friends. Graphic novel

Gun Violence/Gangs

Long Way Down, Jason Reynolds. Fifteen-year-old Will, gun in his waistband, rides the elevator down to street level, determined to get revenge for his brother's murder. At each stop he's confronted by the ghost of someone from his past, dead from gunfire.

Dear Martin. Nic Stone. MLK, gun violence

La Vida Loca, Luis Rodriguez. Published over 20 years ago, it's still highly relevant to those in gangs, or affected by gang life.

The Hate You Give, Angie Thomas. As she straddles two worlds, her poor neighborhood and an upper/middle class prep school, Starr Carter witnesses the unwarranted killing of her longtime good friend, Khalil, a killing that results in violent demonstrations and puts her life in danger.

Health/Physical Challenges

The Fault in Our Stars, John Green. A love story with cancer in the foreground.

Wonder, RJ Palacio. Facially disfigured since birth, August Pullman struggles to find friendship and a place for himself at school among “normal” kids. Realistic and also positive.

Positive: A Memoir, Paige Rawl with Ali Benjamin. A midwestern American girl who was born HIV-positive. When her HIV status is revealed in middle school, she becomes the focus of intense bullying.

Eddie’s Choice, Marilyn Reynolds. Born with a deformed hand, Eddie long ago learned to cope with humor and self-acceptance.

Immigration

The Secret Side of Empty. Maria E Andreu. Immigrant experiences, DREAM Act

I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter. Erika Sanchez. Immigrant experiences; grief, loss

The Border, Steve Schafer. Americanized, undocumented teen works frantically to get a green card while struggling with the usual emotionally fraught issues of teen life.

LGBTQ

What If It’s Us. Becky Albertalli and Adam Silvera. LGBT—male

Carry On. Rainbow Rowell. LGBT romance, male, also with magic

Boy Meets Boy. David Levithan. Gay romance—male

Two Boys Kissing. David Levithan. Based on true story, AIDS, gay romance—male

Love Rules, Marilyn Reynolds. High school senior comes out as lesbian.

No More Sad Goodbyes, Marilyn Reynolds. Autumn is rescued from foster care by lesbian teachers, who also help her place her baby in an open adoption.

Aristotle & Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe, Benjamin Alire Saenz. LGBT romance—male

October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard, Lesléa Newman. A tribute in 68 poems. Although Matthew was beaten to death 20 years ago for being perceived as gay, the issues are, unfortunately, still current.

Love Rules, Marilyn Reynolds. The story of a high school senior who reveals that she's lesbian, as told from her straight best friend's point of view.

Mental Illness

Small Spaces, Katherine Arden

Turtles All The Way Down, John Green. A main character dealing with OCD and a love interest, wrapped up in a mystery.

All The Bright Places, Jennifer Niven. Two teens save each other from jumping off the edge.

Eddie's Choice, Marilyn Reynolds. Pressures of school have Eddie's girlfriend, Rosie, experiencing extreme anxiety.

Guts. Raina Telegemeier. Graphic novel, anxiety

Outsider

Born a Crime. Trevor Noah. Memoir

Hey, Kiddo, Jarrett J. Krosoczka. Addict mom, unknown dad, Jarrett tries to fit in, finds ways to express himself through art. Personal memoir, graphic novel

Mexican White Boy. Matt de la Peña

Overcoming Adversity

It Calls You Back: An Odyssey through Love, Addiction, Revolutions, and Healing, Luis J. Rodriguez

If You Loved Me, Marilyn Reynolds. High school senior struggles to manage anger resulting from incidents of early childhood neglect—incidents of which she has no conscious memory. Also struggling with her decision to remain a virgin until marriage.

PTSD

The Impossible Knife of Memory, Laurie Halse Anderson. Hayley must deal with her father's PTSD as she navigates the challenges of a new school, a love interest, and her desire to escape it all through suicide.

How Dare the Sun Rise: Memoirs of a War Child, Sandra Uwiringiyimana with Abigail Pesta. A girl from the Democratic Republic of the Congo tells the tale of how she survived a massacre, immigrated to America, and overcame her trauma through art and activism.

Shut Up, Marilyn Reynolds. Mother returns, wounded, from Iraq, with horrifying memories and nightmares. Son is suffering from PTSD due to sexual molestation.

Purpose

The Great Work of Your Life, Steven Cope. Finding your life purpose.

Be Here Now, Ram Dass. Following a spiritual path

Racism

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou

To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee

Dear Martin, Nic Stone. The social injustice of racial stereotypes.

Eddie's Choice, Marilyn Reynolds. Mexican-American Eddie Barajas paints over racist graffiti and is targeted by white supremacists.

The Hate You Give, Angie Thomas. As she straddles two worlds, her poor neighborhood and an upper/middle class prep school, Starr Carter witnesses the unwarranted killing of her longtime good friend, Khalil, a killing that results in violent demonstrations and puts her life in danger.

On the Come Up, Angie Thomas. A budding rapper is caught in a controversy that labels her a menace. Also caught between upholding her own values or doing what she can to help her mother pay the rent.

Rape/Molestation

Speak, Laurie Halse Anderson

Boy Toy. Barry Lyga

Shut Up, Marilyn Reynolds. Sexual molestation of nine-year-old boy and his brother's determination to save him.

Telling, Marilyn Reynolds. Sexual molestation of twelve-year-old girl by the father of children for whom she babysits.

But What About Me, Marilyn Reynolds. Erica, a high school senior, struggles to get her life back on track after a brutal rape.

Everything I Knew to be True, Rayna York

Suicide/Related Issues

The Memory of Light, Francisco Stork. Vicky Cruz wakes up in a mental hospital after a failed suicide attempt. Although fiction, the story is based on Stork's own battle with depression.

Teen Pregnancy/Parenting

This is All: The Pillow Book of Cordelia Kenn. Aidan Chambers.

No More Saturday Nights, Norma Klein

Baby Help, Marilyn Reynolds

Detour for Emmy, Marilyn Reynolds

Too Soon for Jeff. Marilyn Reynolds. Teen pregnancy from a boy's perspective

No More Sad Goodbyes, Marilyn Reynolds; Autumn is rescued from foster care by lesbian teachers, who also help her place her baby in an open adoption.

Resources:

Dear Author: Letters of Hope. Joan Kaywell, editor. Top young adult authors respond to kids' toughest issues.

Joan F. Kaywell Books Save Lives Award, University of South Florida, given annually to the book that best represents an adolescent overcoming a situation in such a way as to provide significant insight and hope to a reader.

<https://lib.usf.edu/special-collections/childrens-young-adult-literature/hipple/kaywell-award/>

www.TeachingBooks.net