

# What's New in Young Adult Literature: 2017 Edition

Dr. Bob Seney  
Lakewood, Colorado  
[rwseney@muw.edu](mailto:rwseney@muw.edu)

This is the final list of the books read and selected for my NAGC presentation. The Underlined Books are my personal *Top Ten Reads of 2017*. [This year 18 novels were candidates. Five Candidates for **The Top Read**. **[High Lighted]** All books listed meet Halsted's (and my) criteria for books most appropriate for gifted readers. **The List on the NAGC Conference Web site is not complete since it was submitted early to meet deadlines. This List will be available at my NAGC Presentation. NAGC is the "traditional" closing time for my annual List.**

Alexander, Kwame	<i>Booked</i> (ms)	2016
	I may have found a new favorite author. <i>The Crossover</i> was a heavy contender for my <i>2015 Top Ten Reads</i> . The underline indicates that <i>Booked</i> is under consideration for this year. This time Alexander uses soccer for the vehicle of his story and again uses the poetical form to reel out a remarkable story of coming of age, dealing with bullying, first love, and the break-up of his parents' marriage. Pages 216-233 are a perfect example of the power of bibliotherapy. <b>Great Read!</b>	
	<i>The Playbook: 52 Rules to Aim, Shoot and Score in This Game Called Life</i> (ms)	2017
	Basketball provides the basis for rules of life. Alexander lists the Rules of Life in succinct, precise statements. Using his own personal story, he develops the novel by relating stories of real people, mostly, athletes, who have demonstrated the important Rules of Life and have scored success. I was reminded of <i>365 Days of Wonder: Mr. Brown's Book of Precepts</i> from Palacio's <i>Wonder</i> series.	
	<i>Solo#</i> (ms/hs)	2017
	The Rules of Life this time are found in titles and lyrics of rock and roll music. Blade Morrison is the talented son of a fading rock and roll star, but the family is dysfunctional and there are secrets. When Blade discovers what they are, he is nearly destroyed until he sets out on a quest. Many layered themes and subthemes and again told in poetical form.	
Arden, Katherine	<i>The Bear and the Nightingale</i> (ms)	2017
	<b>A First Novel</b> – Very Promising. A Russian Folk/Fairy Tale set in Medieval Rus'. Vaysa, a young girl with gifts must save her family and village – even when they don't trust her and see her as a Witch. I have pre-ordered the companion, <i>The Girl in the Tower</i> (Dec. 2017).	
Aveyard, Victoria	<i>Red Queen</i> (hs/ms) TR	2015
	Post nuclear apocalypse not dystopia, but society has developed in an alarming way. Mutations have caused a race of silver bloods with strange powers, who have "enslaved" the red blooded normal folk. But then comes Mare: <i>Red and Silver, and stronger than both</i> .	
	<i>Queen Song</i> (ms/hs) A Prequel Novella	2015
	Provides background for the Red Queen with the death of Queen Coriane and the evilness of Queen Elara.	
	<i>Steel Scars</i> (ms/hs) A Prequel Novella	2016
	Sets the scene for <i>Red Queen</i> .	

Barnhill, Kelly	<i>The Girl Who Drank the Moon</i> (e)	2016
	<b>2017 Newbery Medal.</b> Not sure that I would have given it the Medal. Slow start and various story lines were not tightly tied together until the very end. Some very good philosophical thoughts and great characters. Fantasy and magic.	
Bartol, Amy	<i>Secondborn: The Revolution is Born</i> (hs/ms)	2017
	A future society in which second born children serve the First Born. Until Roselle St. Sismode comes of age. Her mother, Othala St. Sismode, Clarity of the Fate of Swords, one of the most powerful rulers of the Republic, seeks to kill her daughter to insure the rule of her Firstborn Son. Adventure, moves fast, and a most interesting society and culture.	
Campbell, Chelsea	<i>Dragon Bound*</i> (ms) SR.	2016
	This is so middle school! Good female protagonist who is funny! Not a hard read but think girls will love it. A very different take on dragons. Unfortunately, maybe a bit too much on the lovey, dovey stuff.	
DiCamillo, Kate	<i>Raymie Nightingale</i> (e)	2016
	<b>2016 National Book Award Finalist.</b> A book about three girls, baton twirling lessons, and the Miss Central Florida Tire contest. No it's a Book about friendship. No, it's philosophical. No, it's...wonderful. This is truly one for the serious reader – it carries a bit of challenge.	
Erskine, Kathryn	<i>The Incredible Magic of Being</i> (e/ms)	2017
	<b>O Wow and Double Wow!</b> Julian is my new favorite protagonist. Diagnosed as highly emotional gifted (speaking Dabrowski here) and obviously intellectually gifted as well, he has some issues. A move to Maine with his two Moms and his Sister, who "has exploded into being a teenager;" a cantankerous next-door neighbor, Mr. X; and the task of helping his family and the world to see the real magic that exists in the universe. What a fantastic read! <b>Selected as my "Tom Hebert Memorial Novel!"</b>	
Flanagan, John	<i>Ranger's Apprentice: The Early Years – The Battle of Hackham Heath</i> (ms).	2016
	Remains my favorite series.	
Garber, Stephanie	<i>Caraval: Remember It's Only a Game</i> (ms/hs)	2017
	A game, an abusive father, a head-strong sister - all leading to an amazing adventure of suspense and many strange characters.	
Gaiman, Neil	<i>The Sleeper and the Spindle</i> (ms/hs)	2015
	Wow! Begins with the book jacket, then the book cover and an amazing retelling and intertwining of <i>The Sleeping Princess</i> and <i>Snowwhite</i> stories. Beautifully illustrated by Chris Riddell, whose illustrations play an important role in telling the story.	
Klingele, Lindsey	<i>The Marked Girl</i> (ms)	2016
	<b>A First Novel:</b> Set in contemporary Los Angles. A strange tattoo, a portal to another dimension, a monumental battle between the wraiths and three teens from the other dimension. Really fun! I am looking forward to Book Two of Three.	
Lewis, John with Andrew Aydin and Nate Powell, Illus.	<i>March Book Three</i> (ms/hs) <b>2016 National Book Award, 2017 Printz Award, Seibert Informational Book Award and YALSA Award for Excellence (And others!)</b> A Graphic novel that is well done (not my favorite genre) but Lewis' narrative of his ordeals in the Civil Rights Movement carries the book.	2016

<u>Lincoln, Jenna</u>	<u><i>The People's Champion</i> (hs/ms)</u>	<u>2017</u>
<i>Book 2: The Protector Project</i> [2016 List]. Mara and Dalin have ended the war and exposed it as an evil experiment. They set out now to bring down the evil queen's rule. Buy at what costs? Author's End Notes are very good. She has conquered the weak second book in a series problem.		
<u>MacLachlan, Patricia</u>	<u><i>The Poet's Dog</i> (e/ms)</u>	<u>2016</u>
Teddy, an Irish wolfhound, is the companion of Sylvan, poet, writer, professor. This is Teddy's delightful, wonderful story – based on the idea: "Dogs speak words, but only poets and children – Hear." Teddy saves two children, Nickel and Flora, from a blizzard and their unique love story begins. This would be a great Read-Aloud.		
<u>Messud, Claire</u>	<u><i>The Burning Girl</i># (ms/hs)</u>	<u>2017</u>
Not your usual story of the breakup of a close relationship between two girls – best friends since preschool. Intense. I expect to see this one on award lists.		
<u>Newman, Lslea</u>	<u><i>October Mourning</i> (hs/ms)</u>	<u>2012</u>
<b>Whoops! 2013 Stonewall Honor Book.</b> A book of poetry inspired by the brutal murder of Matthew Shepard, a gay man in Wyoming. Very moving.		
<u>O'Connor, Barbara</u>	<u><i>Wish</i> (e/ms)</u>	<u>2016</u>
Using every wish trick in the book, Charlie makes a daily wish. Her family is broken and she now lives with an Aunt & Uncle she has never met. Then she discovers that: "I'd been so busy making my wish that I hadn't seen things the way they really are." A great mix of <i>Ruby Holler</i> by Creech (2003 List) and <i>Pax</i> by Pennypacker (2016 List). Wow!		
<u>Paolini, Christopher A.</u>	<u><i>From This to That</i> (ms/hs)</u>	<u>2012</u>
<i>Heart and Home</i> (ms/hs)		
2014		
Two connected novellas, which I missed. Pure sci-fi. I was reminded of the movie <i>Avatar</i> . Space travel via the mind.		
<u>Rossi, Veronica</u>	<u><i>Under the Never Sky</i> * (ms/hs) SR</u>	<u>2012</u>
First in a series that was recommended to me. It was hard to put down. A dystopia novel with Pod Dwellers and Outsiders. Great characters. Really enjoyed, but of course, a Rossi!		
<u>Rowley, J. K.</u>	<u><i>Fantastic Beasts &amp; Where to Find Them</i> (e)</u>	<u>2001</u>
<b>Whoops!</b> I did not read this earlier since a friend said he did not like it. I don't see why! It is funny! Set up as Harry Potter's copy of the text by Newt Scamander with Harry's notes in the margin. The alphabetical list can be a bit tedious but the intro notes, etc. are fun!		
<u>Sullivan, Mark</u>	<u><i>Beneath a Scarlet Sky</i> (hs/ms)</u>	<u>2017</u>
Historical Fiction based on the true story of Pino Pella, a young Italian in Nazi Occupied Italy who helped many Jews escape and served as a spy for the Resistance while in the German Army. An exciting adventure. Good possibility for reluctant male readers, especially if they have an interest in mountain climbing, skiing, and WWII.		
<u>Thomas, Angie</u>	<u><i>The Hate U Give</i> (hs/ms) #</u>	<u>2017</u>
A first novel, made the Long List for National Book Award. Amazing! I expect more awards. Starr lives in two worlds: the black community in which she grew up and the fancy prep school		

where she attends high school. Her worlds collide when her best friend, Khalil, dies in her arms, shot by a policeman. Khalil was unarmed. THUG LIFE: Read the book to find out what this means. "Real" language here, but an important message.

Wheeler, Jeff	<i>The Queen's Poisoner</i> (ms)	2016
	A great fantasy in the ilk of Robin Hobb. A "what-if" retelling of the Richard III saga but in the fantasy genre. Hard for me to put down. Author's Notes at end are very important.	
Wiesner, David & Donna Jo Napoli	<i>Fish Girl</i> (e) A graphic novel – the first for both authors.	2017
	Weisner's usual striking illustrations but a story with a true moral. A young, captive mermaid who finds a friend and freedom. (Napoli of <i>Zel</i> fame and other rewritten fairy tales.)	

<b>Yoon, Nicola</b>	<b><i>Everything, Everything</i> (hs/ms) #* but mild]</b>	<b>2015</b>
	<b>A First Novel.</b> A bubble girl, the boy next door, and first love. Wow! What a story with a very surprising end. If readers have not read <i>The Little Prince</i> – they will want to! This is an author for whom I will be watching!	

<b><i>The Sun Is Also a Star</i> (hs/ms) #* but mild]</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>2016 National Book Award Finalist. 2017 Printz Honor Book. Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Author Award:</b> A teenage poet and a teenage scientist – how do we explain love – by the heart or by science? An unexpected romance grows between a Jamaican girl, who is to be deported, and an American Korean boy controlled by his traditional father. Cultural conflicts, relationship issues, and more. Wow! Not a heavy read, but definitely a serious read.	

### A Special List

I have decided to create this special list of what are books published several years ago. It started because of Woodson's *Brown Girl Dreaming* (2014) – my Top Read of 2015, I began to look back at Woodson's Books that I missed.

<b>Woodson, Jacqueline</b>	<b><i>Locomotion</i> (e/ms)</b>	<b>2003</b>
<b>National Book Award Finalist</b>		
Wow! Don't read this book unless you are ready to have a real emotional ride! Lonnie, aka Locomotion, has a poet's heart and in poetic form, he tells the story of his life, full of tragedy, but yet full of hope. It also has some great lessons on writing poetry.		

<b><i>Peace Locomotion</i> (e/ms)</b>	<b>2009</b>	
In this sequel, Woodson in just 136 pages has written a story that is at once, about family, friendship, love, responsibility, and peace. It is also about how teachers can build up and tear down a student by their attitudes and comments. Set as a series of letters to his sister, Lili, Locomotion writes of their heartbreak at the loss of their parents; their separation to two different foster homes; and how he and his older foster brothers, one of which is just back from the war and has lost a leg, together rebuild trust, love and family. "Pray man," he said. "Pray for Peace." ...the way I see it, "he added. You pray for peace, all the rest of the stuff comes...Peace covers everything, Little Brother. Everything" [Pages 40-41: Rodney to Locomotion.]		
<b><i>I really think this is a must read for everyone.</i></b>		
Now reading: <i>Miracle's Boys</i> (ms)		
2000		

#### Codes:

- # Language Alert
- \* Situation Alert
- e = elementary school
- ms = middle school/junior high
- hs = high school
- SR Student Recommended
- TR Teacher Recommended
- Whoops Books! = Books that got by me that are really great!