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Quality Texts for Children 3 - 16
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UKLA Book Awards 2016 Longlists

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***Please Mr Panda* Steve Anthony (Hodder Children's Books)**

Mr Panda has a box of delectable looking doughnuts which he offers to several impolite animals. This could be a sickly-sweet book but it isn't because the surprise ending upends the whole narrative. There is a superb balance of repetition and the unexpected in the language with the excellent pictures both supporting and challenging the reader.

***Happy Birthday, Madame Chapeau* Andrea Beaty illus. David Roberts (Abrams and Chronicle Books)**

Lonely Madame Chapeau, the remarkable milliner, treats herself to a birthday dinner at a smart restaurant. When her heart-shaped bonnet is snatched by a crow, she discovers the perfect replacement and makes a new friend. The flawless, inventive verse and detailed pictures make this a book which older children in the age group will enjoy time and again.

***Blown Away* Rob Biddulph (HarperCollins)**

A penguin gets blown away by his new kite. Various polar chums who try to save him get carried along as well until they land on a jungly island. However, the inventive friends soon find a way to get home. *Blown Away* includes memorable phrases which offer many opportunities to talk around and beyond the text on the page. This is a book to share and enjoy together.

***This Book Just Ate my Dog* Richard Byrne (Oxford University Press)**

Bella is taking her dog for a walk when it disappears in the fold between the pages. Rescue attempts all fail and eventually Bella disappears too. The reader has to save the situation and all is well in the end. Almost. This very clever story will aid the transition from playing with books to becoming immersed in the story which is offered as the child is encouraged to do both.

***Bears don't Read* Emma Chichester Clark (HarperCollins)**

George the enormous grizzly bear finds life a bit dull until he discovers a book. The pictures make perfect sense but not the words. When he goes to a school for some help with learning to read, people are terrified and the situation turns very nasty. *Bears Don't Read* offers a clever, moving story with a depth and scope of characterisation.

***The Something* Rebecca Cobb (Macmillan Children's Books)**

The discovery of a hole under the cherry tree in the garden has everyone guessing about what might live there. Over a year of changes in the garden the mystery isn't resolved but the narrator keeps on watching and hoping. This gentle story takes the simplest of discoveries and uses it to develop ideas about wildlife and fantasy. It gives readers ample opportunities to join in with the speculation.

***Tiny: The Invisible World of Microbes* Nicola Davies illus. Emily Sutton (Walker Books)**

Tiny offers well-researched information about microbes at a level which young children would find both comprehensible and interesting. The language is clear and vivid, explaining difficult concepts in ways which show their relevance to children's lives. The illustrations have a warmth unusual in non-fiction, helping to draw the reader into this fascinating subject.

***I am Henry Finch* Alexis Deacon illustrated by Viviane Schwartz (Walker Books)**

Henry Finch is part of a flock which do everything together. His first independent thought seems like a disaster when he is eaten but all is well when the beast and later the whole flock understand the importance of challenging the accepted ways of doing things. Text and illustrations are in complete harmony in developing the powerful themes of this exciting book.

***Eddie's Tent* Sarah Garland (Janetta Otter Barry Books)**

Eddie's family go camping, make friends and rescue a puppy in this realistic story which is enhanced by some valuable hints about successful camping at the end. Garland brings the slightly unconventional family completely to life, giving all readers lots to enjoy and to talk about. The text is supportive and clear with enough unexpected detail to hold interest but not slow the narrative.

***Space Dog* Mini Grey (Jonathan Cape)**

It is lonely for Space Dog sorting out the problems of the Dairy Quadrant of the galaxy. When he rescues his sworn enemies, Astrocat and Mousetronaut, they all realise it is better to be friends. *Space Dog* conjures bizarre adventures from the most ordinary beginnings such as breakfast, encouraging children to voyage on their own wild swoops of imagination.

***The Dad with Ten Children* Bénédicte Guettier (Scribblers Books)**

When the daily routine of caring for his ten little children gets a bit much for dad he builds a boat, leaves the children with grandma and sails away on his own. However, after just one day he misses the children so he collects them and they all sail away together. With its spare text and illustrations which add lovely details to the narrative, this is a gem of a book for sharing and early reading.

***This is my Rock* David Lucas (Flying Eye Books)**

Goat battles everyone to stop them climbing up his rock. When he succeeds in driving all the other animals away, he realises that he's probably made a mistake. Fortunately, he has the courage to change his mind. The first thing you notice about *This is my Rock* is the breath-taking design. Then you come to appreciate the text which is both simple and powerful.

***Flood* Gillian McClure (Plaister Press)**

The ox wants to kick the fox and the fox wants to eat the hen but, when the floods come, they have to co-operate to reach safety. Art and text work together to give insights into the force and danger of a flood. The story is beautifully spare and realistic in *Flood*, encouraging slow careful reading in which every word is savoured and the detail of every picture is scrutinised.

***Something about a Bear* Jackie Morris (Janetta Otter Barry Books)**

Something about a Bear is a generously sized, beautiful picture book which shows several species of bears in their natural surroundings. The language is consistently vivid, written with an energy which shows the passion for the subject. Every page is a thing of beauty in this book for the older children in Key Stage One.

***Use your Imagination* Nicola O'Byrne (Nosy Crow)**

When a wolf encourages Rabbit to use his imagination, it looks as though the ending will be disastrous as Wolf is only too keen to imagine them into a very familiar fairy story. Rabbit cleverly changes the ending and all is well. This is one of those lovely books where the child reader is often ahead of the narration, yet the ending is still a surprise.

***Smelly Louie* Catherine Rayner (Macmillan Children's Books)**

Louie the hound does not appreciate the smell of shampoo so he goes off on a walk to get his proper smell back. It's a pity that his family don't appreciate the effort he makes. The vocabulary in this book is so evocative that it is almost olfactory. Rayner treats young readers with immense respect both in words and pictures. *Smelly Louie* takes a simple story and makes it very special.

***On Sudden Hill* Linda Sarah illus. Benji Davies (Simon & Schuster Children's Books)**

Two friends use huge boxes to create imaginary worlds at the top of Sudden Hill. When another boy wants to join them the friendship crumbles but, in the end, becomes even better. This is a story which approaches difficult areas for children and does so with sensitivity and a real understanding of the worlds of childhood.

***Little Red and the Very Hungry Lion* Alex T. Smith (Scholastic Children's Books)**

The story of Little Red Riding Hood moves to an African town setting where a lion is really no match for a clever small girl. Children will love this story for the exuberant twisting of the familiar story. Details in both the text and illustrations are a delight so that adults and children will enjoy reading the book together.

***Following the Tractor* Susan Steggall (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)**

The tractor is central to the life of the farm in this beautifully presented book which takes the reader through a year in which birds, cows and road traffic all follow the tractor. There are lots of splendid farm machines to enjoy in the detailed pictures which often have some surprises. The text is a lovely balance of the factual and the poetic.

***Hoot Owl, Master of Disguise* Sean Taylor illustrated by Jean Jullien (Walker Books)**

It is night and Hoot Owl is very hungry. Though he believes he is both a fierce hunter and a master of disguise, readers soon learn that he is neither. When he manages to catch a pizza all is well. There is a real pleasure for children in being more sensible than the characters in the book you are reading. *Hoot Owl* is very funny, has a wildly inventive vocabulary and terrific pictures.

***The First Slodge* Jeanne Willis and Jenni Desmond (Little Tiger Press)**

The first Slodge is the only creature in her world as it is created. She's none too happy when she meets another Slodge but she also discovers other creatures which aren't all friendly. *The First*

Slodge explores ideas of sharing and identity in a way which makes difficult concepts very clear for young readers. Both story and pictures are splendid.

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***The Fish in the Bathtub* Eoin Colfer illus. Peter Bailey (Barrington Stoke)**

Lucja is determined that her grandfather will not have the carp in the bathtub as a Christmas Eve feast. The Polish setting is evoked beautifully by both the text and illustrations in this family story. History, traditions and family relationships support the narrative, giving a depth to a little book easily in the scope of most young independent readers.

***The Astounding Broccoli Boy* Frank Cottrell Boyce (Macmillan Children's Books)**

Rory is the natural hero type but when he mysteriously turns bright green it is a sure sign he has developed superpowers. On his night-time excursions from the isolation hospital he meets other green children and is ready to save the world. There is a beautiful blend of absurdity in events and reality of characters in this fast-paced, very funny book.

***Demolition Dad* Phil Earle illustrated by Sara Ogilvie (Orion Children's Books)**

Jake's dad keeps his part-time wrestling a secret but Jake has ambitions for his father to become a superstar of the sport. This very funny book has great appeal because it has a heart behind all the jokes. Fame is shown as being shallow; it is through real bravery that Jake's dad becomes a hero. Warm, clever and hilarious, this is a dropkick of a book.

***The Sleeper and the Spindle* Neil Gaiman illustrated by Chris Riddell (Bloomsbury)**

This beautifully crafted book takes the story of Sleeping Beauty and spins something new and very relevant from it. Some things are as you would expect, but others are surprising, encouraging you to look again at the conventions of the fairy tale. Text and illustrations are interwoven as briar roses as both offer both beauty and prickles. *The Sleeper and the Spindle* is a book to cherish.

***Herculfleas* Sam Gayton (Andersen Press)**

It isn't easy to be a hero when you are smaller than a raisin. When Greta comes looking for a hero to save her town from a giant, Herculfleas sees his chance. Gayton has created something very special here. It is a fantasy world made very real by the strength of the characterisation as well as the glorious details of the setting such as the top hat home of the wonderful flea family.

***The Imaginary* A.F. Harrold illus. Emily Gravett (Bloomsbury)**

Amanda has a best friend who happens to be imaginary. While nobody else can see him Rudger is safe but then a sinister stranger arrives. A.F. Harrold takes readers to the dark heart of imagination heart where the nature of friendship is tested. This is a very moving book which encourages readers to consider worlds, real and imaginary from unique perspectives.

***The Fastest Boy in the World* Elizabeth Laird (Macmillan Children's Books)**

Solomon is delighted when his grandfather decides to take him on a trip to Addis Ababa. They walk the 23 miles together. When grandfather collapses Solomon has to run home for help. The detail in the character development, plot and settings of *The Fastest Boy in the World* make it powerful and memorable. Readers will be moved by Solomon's determination.

***The Dangerous Discoveries of Gully Potchard* Julia Lee (Oxford University Press)**

Gully has a good job as a delivery boy in Victorian Southampton until he bumps into acquaintances who try to involve him in a dognapping scam. This is the start of a gloriously theatrical adventure which gathers subplots as it romps towards its resolution. This is a book for children who have developed some stamina as readers and who love to become immersed in a great story.

***Joe All Alone* Joanna Nadin (Little, Brown Young Readers)**

Joe's mum and her boyfriend decide to leave him in Peckham when they go on holiday to Spain. Joe is looking forward to a week of doing whatever he likes but money runs out and mum doesn't come back. When things turn dangerous Joe has to make some difficult decisions. Nadin explores a complex situation with an integrity which will captivate older readers.

***Who is King?* Beverley Naidoo illus. Piet Grobler (Janetta Otter Barry Books)**

Stories from many parts of Africa have been retold with great verve in this valuable collection. Naidoo respects the original narratives while giving them a modern lustre through innovative, vivid vocabulary and phrasing. The illustrations are exuberant, drawing the reader into each story. There is much wisdom to be found here and much pleasure in finding it.

***The Boundless* Kenneth Oppell (David Fickling Books)**

Reading *The Boundless* is like having a spectacular movie playing straight into your mind. This is an adventure on a huge scale, not least because the main character is a seven mile long train built to help pioneers move across Canada. The hurtling action is beautifully complemented by an unusually reflective hero and a wonderfully vivid supporting cast.

***Cakes in Space* Phillip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre (Oxford University Press)**

Astra will spend a hundred and ninety nine years in hibernation before she reaches her new home on Nova Mundi. Unfortunately, when she asks the food replicator for the ultimate cake she brings new species of carnivorous confectionary into being. A lovely book which encourages newly independent readers to muck around with big ideas, *Cakes in Space* is bound to be very popular.

***Goth Girl* Chris Riddell (Macmillan Children's Books)**

Ghastly-Gorm Castle hosts a celebrity baking competition. From this beginning Chris Riddell romps joyfully through all sort of genres peopling them with remarkable characters such as Gordon Ramsgate and Alfred, Lord Tennislesson. This is very much a book for children and adults to enjoy together as it offers slices of strange deliciousness for everyone.

***Five Children on the Western Front* Kate Saunders (Faber & Faber)**

Kate Saunders moves time forward a few years from the events of *Five Children and It*. When the Lamb and Edie rediscover the Psammead, Cyril and Robert are about to embark for the Western Front. This book conveys a powerfully moving story with a lightness of touch which Nesbit would have admired.

***The Cat Who Came in Off the Roof* Annie M.G. Schmidt illus. Nathan Burton, trans. David Colmer (Pushkin)**

Miss Minou is a rather strange lodger but she is remarkably good at finding stories for her struggling journalist landlord. This newly translated book recognises that children find adults funny, bewildering and fascinating. It offers them evil villains but cats and children will triumph- as they always should.

***Frank Einstein and the Antimatter Motor* John Scieszka (Amulet Books)**

When genius scientist and inventor Frank Einstein creates an antimatter motor to win a science prize, what could possibly go wrong? The answer is 'just about everything' in this spectacular book which combines fast-paced storytelling with a depth of knowledge of the science which is central to the plot. Scieszka lures readers into his mad laboratory to join him in playing with big ideas.

***The Pilot and the Little Prince* Peter Sis (Pushkin)**

This handsome book is a biography of Antoine de Saint Exupéry author of *The little Prince*. It tells the story of a remarkable life very astutely, picking out the aspects which will appeal greatly to children. The innovative design of each page enhances the text, often making the scope of the story even more intense. This ravishing book is a fine tribute to a remarkable man.

***Lockwood and Co.: the whispering skull* Jonathan Stroud (Doubleday)**

The teenage psychic investigators who run Lockwood and Co are, as ever, having a difficult time. Then a complex and terrifying case comes their way. Jonathan Stroud is a literary tightrope walker holding his balance between humour and horror in this powerful and demanding novel for the older children in the age range.

***A Tiger Tale* Holly Webb illus. Catherine Rayner (Scholastic Children's Books)**

Kate is struggling to rebuild her life following the death of her much loved grandfather. When her toy tiger becomes real, its grandfatherly wisdom helps her make sense of the changes in her life. Holly Webb is very attuned to the thoughts and fears of children, creating a story which is reassuring without ever giving easy answers.

***Atlas of Adventures* Rachel Williams illus. Lucy Letherland (Wide Eyed Editions)**

This is something entirely new- an atlas which invites readers to imagine the experiences they could have in some of the world's most exciting places. As well as the main text, every page offers nuggets of surprising information interwoven into the wonderful illustrations. This is an ideal book to browse through together to enjoy the facts and find the visual jokes.

12-16

***Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda* Becky Albertalli (Penguin Books)**

Simon is happy being in the background while he decides when and how to come out. When one of his emails is read by a class blackmailer, everything is out of Simon's control. Though it deals with difficult themes relevant to teenagers, this is certainly not a solemn book. It includes light, funny and romantic material while never sentimentalising or ridiculing.

***A Song for Ella Grey* David Almond (Hodder Children's Books)**

Claire and Ella have been friends for as long as they can remember but when the enigmatic Orpheus wanders into their lives, Ella is drawn closer and closer to him while Claire becomes the recorder of their tragedy. This retelling of Orpheus and Eurydice makes the story relevant to modern lives but it is the music of the language that makes this book unique.

***Blindside* Aiden Chambers (Barrington Stoke)**

Nate likes to win and has ambitions to be an elite athlete until a car crash changes everything. While he is in hospital he meets a boy who helps him see new possibilities for his life. This very

approachable book makes the main character very real. Though his situation is unusual the theme of changing ambitions is relevant to all readers.

***Oxford Illustrated Shakespeare Dictionary* David & Ben Crystal (Oxford University Press)**

Sometimes you find a book and think, 'Why didn't someone do this years ago?' The answer is probably that no-one else could have approached the job or seen it through to completion so magnificently. This is much more than a valuable resource to make Shakespeare's vocabulary accessible to students; it is so crammed with delicious snippets that it is a delight to browse.

***Apple and Rain* Sarah Crossan (Bloomsbury)**

For eleven years, Apple has been imagining how great it would be for her mother to come back. When she does, things are not at all as Apple had hoped. It is excellent to find a book which is within the scope of the younger readers in this age group but which also develops the themes in an unsentimental way using powerful language and images.

***This is Not a Love Story* Keren David (Atom)**

Three English-speaking teenagers living in Amsterdam are drawn together. The multiple narrations work well because Keren David has such empathy with her young characters. Each is crisply real, handling life in different ways and giving new depths in their understanding of each other. It is a love story in so many ways, not least for the loving depiction of Amsterdam.

***The Apple Tart of Hope* Sarah Moore Fitzgerald (Orion)**

Oscar and Meg have always been close friends so when Meg moves to New Zealand it is very easy for the corrosive newcomer, Paloma, to take her place. Then Oscar, baker of the best apples tarts in the world, disappears. This is a warm, wise book about characters moving from childhood towards their adult selves. It will find many admirers among young readers.

***The Door that Led to Where* Sally Gardner (Hot Key Books)**

When, much to his surprise, AJ gets a job in a lawyers' office, he is thrown into a mystery involving time-travelling theft and murder in nineteenth century London. The plotting of this intricate novel is so precise that every detail matters as you are drawn into AJ's worlds. Sally Gardner's writing is as powerful, tricky and powerful as the story she has to tell.

***The Lie Tree* Frances Hardinge (Macmillan Children's Books)**

Faith's father, a Victorian clergyman and renowned amateur palaeontologist, dies suddenly. Driven to find out the truth about his death and his life, Faith discovers the plausible lies and extraordinary truth. Frances Hardinge's dark mystery draws together themes which are as disquieting and immediate to the modern reader as they are to the Victorian characters in this unique book.

***There will be Lies* Nick Lake (Bloomsbury)**

Shelby has always been home-schooled and kept away from the world. She is almost eighteen when she is involved in a road accident. While unconscious, Coyote the trickster from Native American folklore warns her that there will be lies before she finds the truth. Dreams, legends and a contemporary thriller are plaited together in this excellent book.

***Pike* Anthony McGowan (Barrington Stoke)**

Kenny and Nicky are out fishing when they see a sparkle of gold in the water. In a family where money is a constant worry, something valuable could make all the difference. Nicky's discovery brings him close to some very dangerous people. This tight narrative about real people and real problems is written in a way which will engage and satisfy readers.

***An Island of our Own* Sally Nichols (Scholastic Children's Books)**

Life has been tough for Holly's family since her mother dies. She feels bad that her elder brother has given up the chance of university to keep the family together so when a photo album suggests a family treasure, Holly is eager to take her brothers on a journey to find it. This fast-paced adventure shines with the characters' reality and the quality of its writing.

***We are all Made of Molecules* Susin Nielsen (Andersen Press)**

Stewart and Ashley could not be more different, so when Stewart and his dad move into her house Ashley is horrified by the changes in her life and what her friends will think of her. The two young narrators draw you into this often hilarious and always poignant family story. It approaches real issues for young readers with an admirable sensitivity and lightness of treatment.

***All the Bright Places* Jennifer Niven (Puffin)**

Violet and Finch meet at the top of the school bell-tower when both are considering jumping. She is very popular; he is usually called 'Freak.' As they work together on a project, their friendship deepens: one moves towards death and the other towards life. The alternating first person narration of chapters gives a depth of insight into two completely believable young people.

***Jessica's Ghost* Andrew Norriss (David Fickling Books)**

Francis has always loved fashion, making clothes for his collection of dolls. This makes him an easy target for bullies. His friendship with Jessica (who no-one else can see) gradually draws him to others who, like him, are outsiders. *Jessica's Ghost* is a perfect book for younger teenage readers as it considers relevant issues and offers hope.

***The Ghosts of Heaven* Marcus Sedgwick (Orion Indigo)**

Four independent stories are set in different times and with different characters are drawn together by the image of the spiral. Each story speaks in some way for the human reaching out for the unknown and, when put together the effect is profoundly moving in many ways. Beautifully written and entirely original, this is an important book.

***The Alex Crow* Andrew Smith (Electric Monkey)**

Recently adopted Ariel and Max are sent to summer camp in the hope that there will be some much-needed bonding. Ariel's new father is a genetic scientist and the outcomes of his experiments are getting closer and closer. Smith weaves in the story of a nineteenth century arctic expedition and a suicidal bionic crow. Somehow, the whole thing comes together in this extraordinary book.

***Black Dove, White Raven* Elizabeth Wein (Electric Monkey)**

Em and Teo are taken to live in Ethiopia when Teo's mother dies in an aviation accident. As they grow up together, both learn to fly but only Teo is required to be a pilot in Haile Selassie's new airforce. This carefully engineered takes readers on a slow, thoughtful reading experience with a fascinating historical setting and compelling characters.

***The Art of Being Normal* Lisa Williamson (David Fickling Books)**

David's best friends know he wants to be a girl. When Leo, who has just joined the school, defends David in a fight, a friendship develops. Leo has a secret too and it isn't easy to keep secrets in a school. This novel about gender identities succeeds so well because Lisa Williamson is astute in her depiction of teenagers and has created believable, sympathetic characters.

Jackie Brien

UKLA Team