

Valuing diversity

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Amina's Voice by Hena Khan

From the publisher:

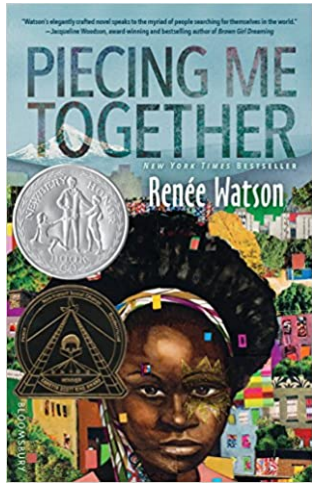
Amina has never been comfortable in the spotlight. She is happy just hanging out with her best friend, Soojin. Except now that she's in middle school everything feels different. Soojin is suddenly hanging out with Emily, one of the "cool" girls in the class, and even talking about changing her name to something more "American." Does Amina need to start changing too? Or hiding who she is to fit in? While Amina grapples with these questions, she is devastated when her local mosque is vandalized.



American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang

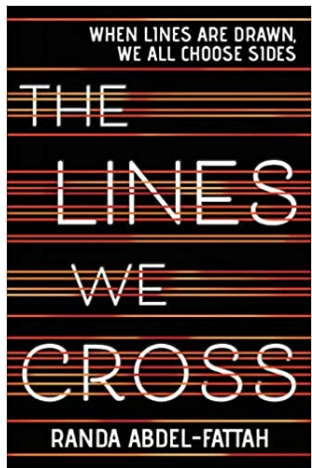
From the publisher:

Jin Wang starts at a new school where he's the only Chinese-American student. When a boy from Taiwan joins his class, Jin doesn't want to be associated with an FOB like him. Jin just wants to be an all-American boy, because he's in love with an all-American girl. Danny is an all-American boy: great at basketball, popular with the girls. But his obnoxious Chinese cousin Chin-Kee's annual visit is such a disaster that it ruins Danny's reputation at school, leaving him with no choice but to transfer somewhere he can start all over again. The Monkey King has lived for thousands of years and mastered the arts of kung fu and the heavenly disciplines. He's ready to join the ranks of the immortal gods in heaven. But there's no place in heaven for a monkey. Each of these characters cannot help himself alone, but how can they possibly help each other? They're going to have to find a way—if they want fix the disasters their lives have become.



Piecing Me Together by Renée Watson

From the publisher: Jade believes she must get out of her poor neighborhood if she's ever going to succeed. Her mother tells her to take advantage of every opportunity that comes her way. And Jade has: every day she rides the bus away from her friends and to the private school where she feels like an outsider, but where she has plenty of opportunities. But some *opportunities* she doesn't really welcome, like an invitation to join Women to Women, a mentorship program for "at-risk" girls. Just because her mentor is black and graduated from the same high school doesn't mean she understands where Jade is coming from. She's tired of being singled out as someone who needs help, someone people want to fix. Jade wants to speak, to create, to express her joys and sorrows, her pain and her hope. Maybe there are some things she could show other women about understanding the world and finding ways to be real, to make a difference.



The Lines We Cross by

From the publisher: Randa Abdel-Fattah

Michael likes to hang out with his friends and play with the latest graphic design software. His parents drag him to rallies held by their anti-immigrant group, which rails against the tide of refugees flooding the country. And it all makes sense to Michael.

Until Mina, a beautiful girl from the other side of the protest lines, shows up at his school, and turns out to be funny, smart -- and a Muslim refugee from Afghanistan. Suddenly, his parents' politics seem much more complicated.

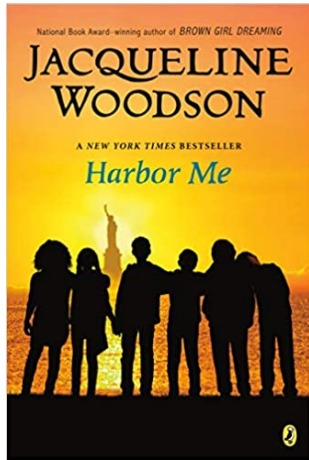
Mina has had a long and dangerous journey fleeing her besieged home in Afghanistan, and now faces a frigid reception at her new prep school, where she is on scholarship. As tensions rise, lines are drawn. Michael has to decide where he stands. Mina has to protect herself and her family. Both have to choose what they want their world to look like.



The First Rule of Punk by Celia C. Pérez

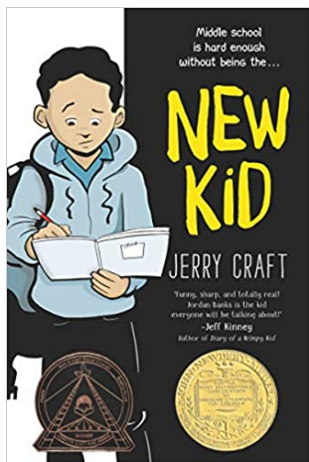
From School Library Journal:

A fun romp through the awkward years of middle school that examines themes of identity and culture. When Malu has to move away from her dad and everything she knows, she takes her love of punk music with her. Following the rules of punk, she embarks on a new school journey, full of misadventures and hilarious life lessons. Malu is happy not to fit in with the crowd yet cannot bring herself to tell her mom that her passion for punk is not a rebellious phase—it's who she is. When classmates label Malu a coconut (brown on the outside and white on the inside), she is determined to prove to her school and herself that she is proud of her Mexican roots. With tenderness and humor, Pérez explores the joys and challenges of being biracial. Readers will connect with Malu, a strong protagonist who leaps off the page and whose zine-inspired artistry boldly illustrates how she deals with life.



Harbor Me by Jacqueline Woodson

From the publisher: It all starts when six kids have to meet for a weekly chat--by themselves, with no adults to listen in. There, in the room they soon dub the ARTT Room (short for "A Room to Talk"), they discover it's safe to talk about what's bothering them--everything from Esteban's father's deportation and Haley's father's incarceration to Amari's fears of racial profiling and Ashton's adjustment to his changing family fortunes. When the six are together, they can express the feelings and fears they have to hide from the rest of the world. And together, they can grow braver and more ready for the rest of their lives.



New Kid by Jerry Craft

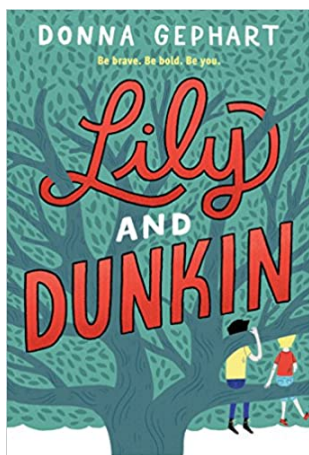
From the publisher:

Winner of the Newbery Medal, Coretta Scott King Author Award, and Kirkus Prize for Young Readers' Literature!

Perfect for fans of Raina Telgemeier and Gene Luen Yang, *New Kid* is a timely, honest graphic novel about starting over at a new school where diversity is low and the struggle to fit in is real, from award-winning author-illustrator Jerry Craft.

Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade.

As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds--and not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself?



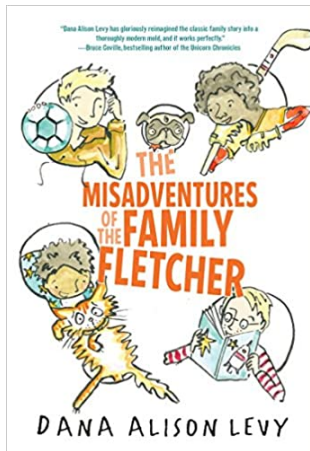
Lily and Dunkin by Donna Gephart

From the publisher:

Lily Jo McGrother, born Timothy McGrother, is a girl. But being a girl is not so easy when you look like a boy. Especially when you're in the eighth grade.

Dunkin Dorfman, birth name Norbert Dorfman, is dealing with bipolar disorder and has just moved from the New Jersey town he's called home for the past thirteen years. This would be hard enough, but the fact that he is also hiding from a painful secret makes it even worse.

One summer morning, Lily Jo McGrother meets Dunkin Dorfman, and their lives forever change.

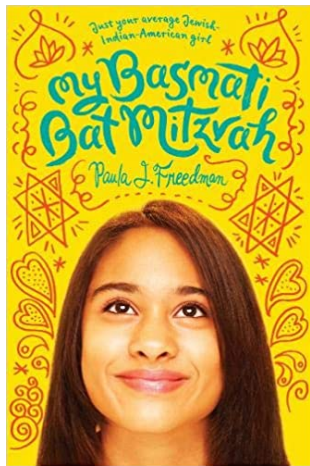


The Misadventures of Family Fletcher by Dana Alison Levy

From the publisher:

The start of the school year is not going as the Fletcher brothers hoped. Each boy finds his plans for success veering off in unexpected and sometimes disastrous directions. And at home, their miserable new neighbor complains about everything. As the year continues, the boys learn the hard and often hilarious lesson that sometimes what you least expect is what you come to care about the most.

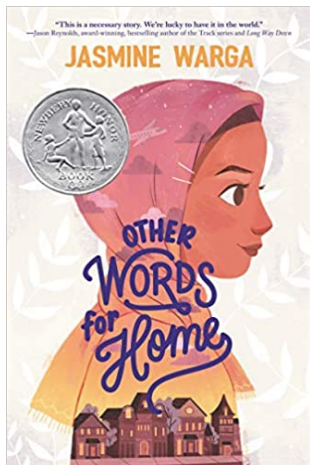
"With its semi-episodic structure, laugh-out-loud humor, and mix of zaniness and love, Levy's debut offers something truly significant: a middle-grade family story featuring gay parents and interracial families that is never about either issue." —*School Library Journal*,



My Basmati Bat Mitzvah by Paula J. Freedman

From the publisher:

During the fall leading up to her bat mitzvah, Tara (Hindi for "star") Feinstein has a lot more than her Torah portion on her mind. Between Hebrew school and study sessions with the rabbi, there doesn't seem to be enough time to hang out with her best friend Ben-O—who might also be her boyfriend—and her other best friend, Rebecca, who's getting a little too cozy with the snotty Sheila Rosenberg. Not to mention working on her robotics project with the class clown Ryan Berger, or figuring out what to do with a priceless heirloom sari that she accidentally ruined. Amid all this drama, Tara considers how to balance her Indian and Jewish identities and what it means to have a bat mitzvah while questioning her faith.



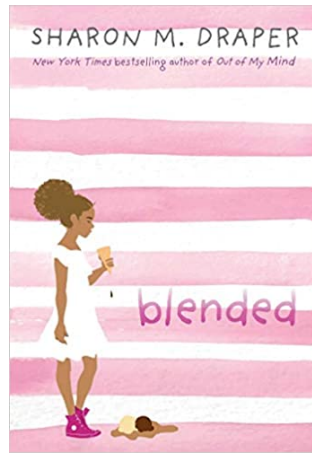
Other Words for Home by Jasmine Warga

From the publisher:

Jude never thought she'd be leaving her beloved older brother and father behind, all the way across the ocean in Syria. But when things in her hometown start becoming volatile, Jude and her mother are sent to live in Cincinnati with relatives.

At first, everything in America seems too fast and too loud. The American movies that Jude has always loved haven't quite prepared her for starting school in the US—and her new label of "Middle Eastern," an identity she's never known before.

But this life also brings unexpected surprises—there are new friends, a whole new family, and a school musical that Jude might just try out for. Maybe America, too, is a place where Jude can be seen as she really is.



Blended by Sharon M. Draper

From the publisher:

Eleven-year-old Isabella's parents are divorced, so she has to switch lives every week: One week she's Isabella with her dad, his girlfriend Anastasia, and her son Darren living in a fancy house where they are one of the only black families in the neighborhood. The next week she's Izzy with her mom and her boyfriend John-Mark in a small, not-so-fancy house that she loves.

Because of this, Isabella has always felt pulled between two worlds. And now that her parents are divorced, it seems their fights are even worse, and they're always about HER. Isabella feels completely stuck in the middle, split and divided between them more than ever. And she is beginning to realize that being split between Mom and Dad involves more than switching houses, switching nicknames, switching backpacks: it's also about switching identities. Her dad is black, her mom is white, and strangers are always commenting: "You're so exotic!" "You look so unusual." "But what are you really?" She knows what they're really saying: "You don't look like your parents." "You're different." "What race are you really?" And when her parents, who both get engaged at the same time, get in their biggest fight ever, Isabella doesn't just feel divided, she feels ripped in two. What does it mean to be half white or half black? To belong to half mom and half dad? And if you're only seen as half of this and half of that, how can you ever feel whole?

It seems like nothing can bring Isabella's family together again—until the worst thing happens. Isabella and Darren are stopped by the police. A cell phone is mistaken for a gun. And shots are fired.