

## RIVERSTONE'S NEWBERY MOCK TRIALS

### 4 - 6th Grade Students

The American Library Association (ALA) awards a medal for the most distinguished children's book of the year. The award, named after John Newbery, an eighteenth-century English Bookseller, was first awarded in 1922. The purpose of the Newbery medal was: "To encourage original and creative work in the field of books for children. To emphasize to the public that contributions to literature for children deserve similar recognition for poetry, plays or novels. To give those librarians, who make it their life work to serve children's reading interest, an opportunity to encourage good writing in this field." The 2016 award will be announced on January 11, 2016.

Because of the vast number of books meeting the requirements for the Newbery Award, we do not know which books will be in the top. Goodreads has published a list of over 70 books they believe are contenders. Our list of seven has been created from this list and based on recommendations from teachers, community members, and students.

Please consider reading the summaries for the listed books and then read at least one of these books over the Winter Break. During the first week back from break we will hold mock trials to select our choices for the 2016 Newbery Award. Mock trials will be held in 4th - 6th grade classes. Each class will select its award winner.

Because these books were first published in 2016, the library does not have copies. Please consider borrowing a book from the Boise Public Library or purchasing one.

The Mock Trials are sponsored by the Riverstone Library and we hope they will become an annual event.

The following book summaries and images are downloaded from Goodreads. Please use the embedded links for additional information.



## Another Kind of Hurricane

by [Tamara Ellis Smith](#)

In this stunning debut novel, two very different characters—a black boy who loses his home in Hurricane Katrina and a white boy in Vermont who loses his best friend in a tragic accident—come together to find healing.

A hurricane, a tragic death, two boys, one marble. How they intertwine is at the heart of this beautiful, poignant book. When ten-year-old Zavion loses his home in Hurricane Katrina, he and his father are forced to flee to Baton Rouge. And when Henry, a ten-year-old boy in northern Vermont, tragically loses his best friend, Wayne, he flees to ravaged New Orleans to help with hurricane relief efforts—and to search for a marble that was in the pocket of a pair of jeans donated to the Red Cross.

Rich with imagery and crackling with hope, this is the unforgettable story of how lives connect in unexpected, even magical, ways.

“In Smith’s poetic hands, this poignant story barrels across the pages and into the reader’s heart, reminding us that magic can arise from the deepest tragedy.” —Kathi Appelt, Newbery Honor Award winner and two-time National Book Award Finalist.



## Circus Mirandus

by Cassie Beasley

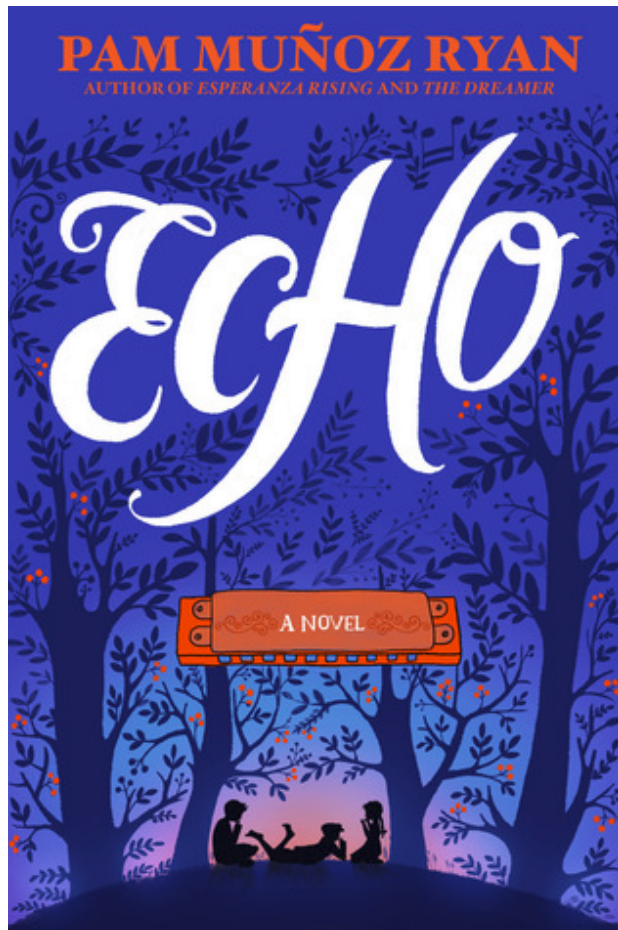
**Fans of *Big Fish*, *Peter Pan*, and Roald Dahl will fall in love with *Circus Mirandus*, which celebrates the power of seeing magic in world.**

Do you believe in magic?

Micah Tuttle does.

Even though his awful Great-Aunt Gertrudis doesn't approve, Micah believes in the stories his dying Grandpa Ephraim tells him of the magical Circus Mirandus: the invisible tiger guarding the gates, the beautiful flying birdwoman, and the magician more powerful than any other—the Man Who Bends Light. Finally, Grandpa Ephraim offers proof. The Circus is real. And the Lightbender owes Ephraim a miracle. With his friend Jenny Mendoza in tow, Micah sets out to find the Circus and the man he believes will save his grandfather.

The only problem is, the Lightbender doesn't want to keep his promise. And now it's up to Micah to get the miracle he came for.



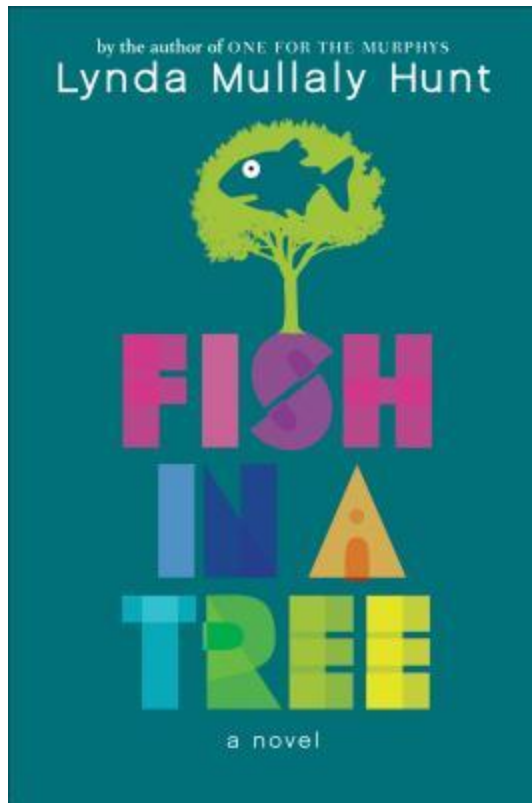
## Echo by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Music, magic, and a real-life miracle meld in this genre-defying masterpiece from storytelling maestro Pam Muñoz Ryan.

Lost and alone in a forbidden forest, Otto meets three mysterious sisters and suddenly finds himself entwined in a puzzling quest involving a prophecy, a promise, and a harmonica.

Decades later, Friedrich in Germany, Mike in Pennsylvania, and Ivy in California each, in turn, become interwoven when the very same harmonica lands in their lives. All the children face daunting challenges: rescuing a father, protecting a brother, holding a family together. And ultimately, pulled by the invisible thread of destiny, their suspenseful solo stories converge in an orchestral crescendo.

Richly imagined and masterfully crafted, ECHO pushes the boundaries of genre and form, and shows us what is possible in how we tell stories. The result is an impassioned, uplifting, and virtuosic tour de force that will resound in your heart long after the last note has been struck.



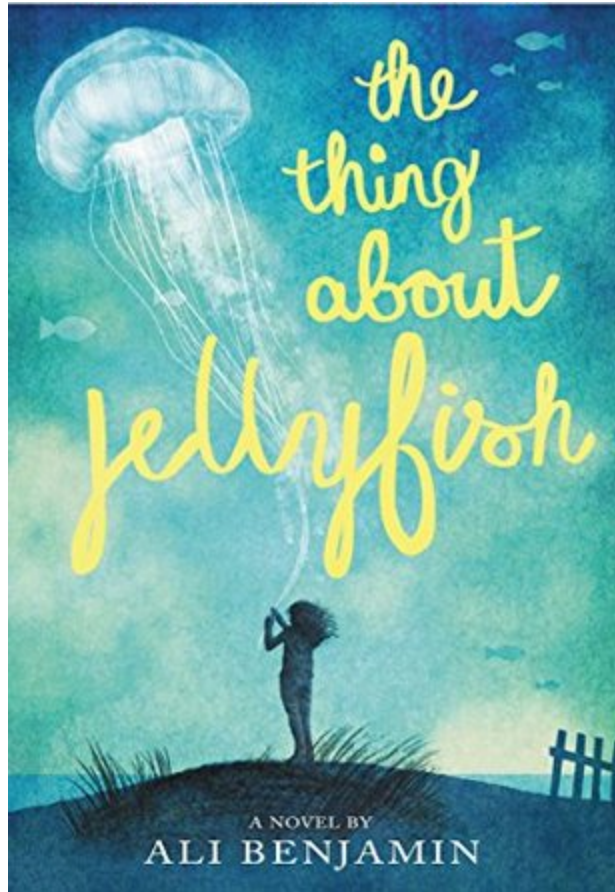
## Fish In A Tree

by Lynda Mullaly Hunt

The author of the beloved *One for the Murphys* gives readers an emotionally-charged, uplifting novel that will speak to anyone who's ever thought there was something wrong with them because they didn't fit in.

"Everybody is smart in different ways. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its life believing it is stupid."

Ally has been smart enough to fool a lot of smart people. Every time she lands in a new school, she is able to hide her inability to read by creating clever yet disruptive distractions. She is afraid to ask for help; after all, how can you cure dumb? However, her newest teacher Mr. Daniels sees the bright, creative kid underneath the trouble maker. With his help, Ally learns not to be so hard on herself and that dyslexia is nothing to be ashamed of. As her confidence grows, Ally feels free to be herself and the world starts opening up with possibilities. She discovers that there's a lot more to her—and to everyone—than a label, and that great minds don't always think alike.

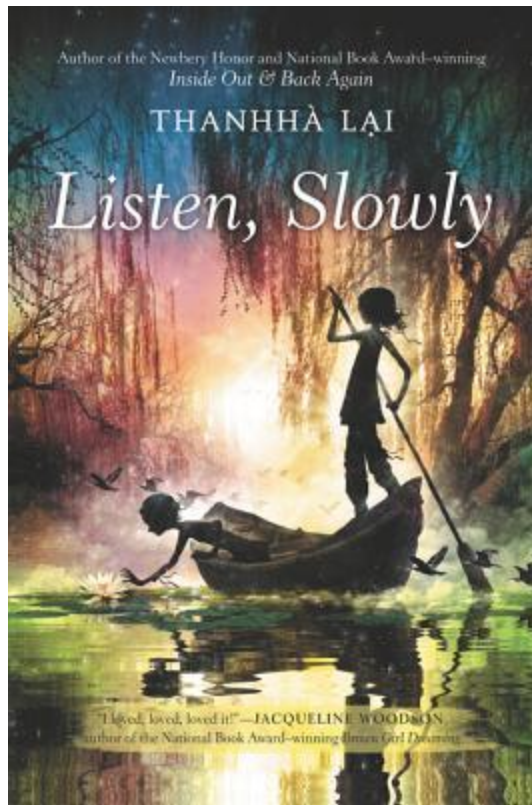


## The Thing About Jellyfish by Ali Benjamin

**This stunning debut novel about grief and wonder was an instant *New York Times* bestseller and captured widespread critical acclaim, including selection as a 2015 National Book Award finalist!**

After her best friend dies in a drowning accident, Suzy is convinced that the true cause of the tragedy must have been a rare jellyfish sting-things don't just happen for no reason. Retreating into a silent world of imagination, she crafts a plan to prove her theory--even if it means traveling the globe, alone. Suzy's achingly heartfelt journey explores life, death, the astonishing wonder of the universe...and the potential for love and hope right next door.





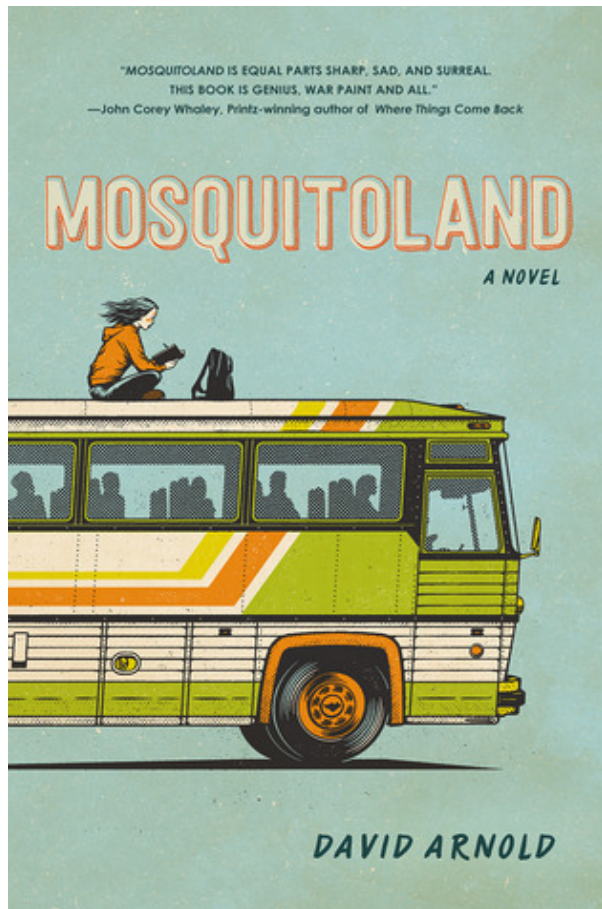
## Listen, Slowly

by Thanhha Lai

This remarkable novel from Thanhha Lai, New York Times bestselling author of the National Book Award-winning and Newbery Honor Book *Inside Out & Back Again*, follows a young girl as she learns the true meaning of family.

A California girl born and raised, Mai can't wait to spend her vacation at the beach. Instead, though, she has to travel to Vietnam with her grandmother, who is going back to find out what really happened to her husband during the Vietnam War. Mai's parents think this trip will be a great opportunity for their out-of-touch daughter to learn more about her culture. But to Mai, those are their roots, not her own. Vietnam is hot, smelly, and the last place she wants to be. Besides barely speaking the language, she doesn't know the geography, the local customs, or even her distant relatives. To survive her trip, Mai must find a balance between her two completely different worlds.

Perfect for fans of Rita Williams-Garcia and Linda Sue Park, *Listen, Slowly* is an irresistibly charming and emotionally poignant tale about a girl who discovers that home and culture, family and friends, can all mean different things.



## Mosquitoland

by David Arnold

*"I am a collection of oddities, a circus of neurons and electrons: my heart is the ringmaster, my soul is the trapeze artist, and the world is my audience. It sounds strange because it is, and it is, because I am strange."*

After the sudden collapse of her family, Mim Malone is dragged from her home in northern Ohio to the "wastelands" of Mississippi, where she lives in a medicated milieu with her dad and new stepmom. Before the dust has a chance to settle, she learns her mother is sick back in Cleveland.

So she ditches her new life and hops aboard a northbound Greyhound bus to her real home and her real mother, meeting a quirky cast of fellow travelers along the way. But when her thousand-mile journey takes a few turns she could never see coming, Mim must confront her own demons, redefining her notions of love, loyalty, and what it means to be sane.

Told in an unforgettable, kaleidoscopic voice, "Mosquitoland" is a modern American odyssey, as hilarious as it is heartbreaking.