

ThoughtCo.

Award-Winning Historical Fiction for Middle Grade Readers

Novels for Kids in the Grades 4-8 Range

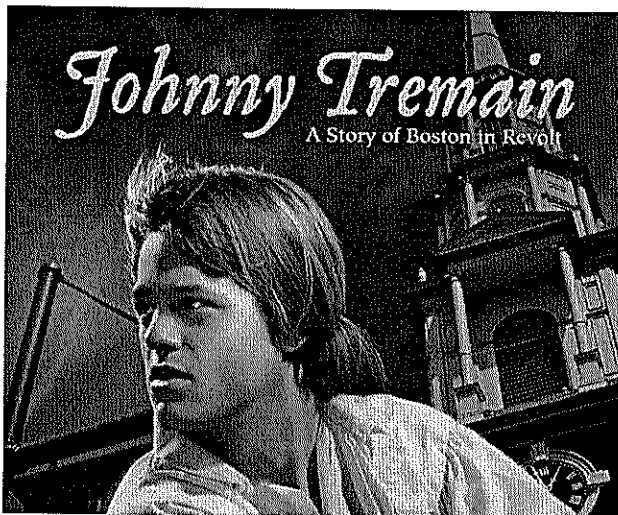
by Elizabeth Kennedy

Updated July 15, 2017

These award-winning books of historical fiction for middle grade readers are all books I recommend. The awards won include the prestigious John Newbery Medal, the Scott O'Dell Prize for Historical Fiction and the National Book Award for Young People's Literature. They represent time periods from the 1770s to the 1970s. These novels will appeal to kids somewhere within the upper elementary and middle school range (Grades 4-8) As reviewer and librarian Jean Hatfield says, "Historical fiction allows young people to experience history in an entertaining way, to meet people, including some their own age, from the past and to learn about other times and places." **Keep scrolling to read about all 13 of the books.**

01 Johnny Tremain

of 13

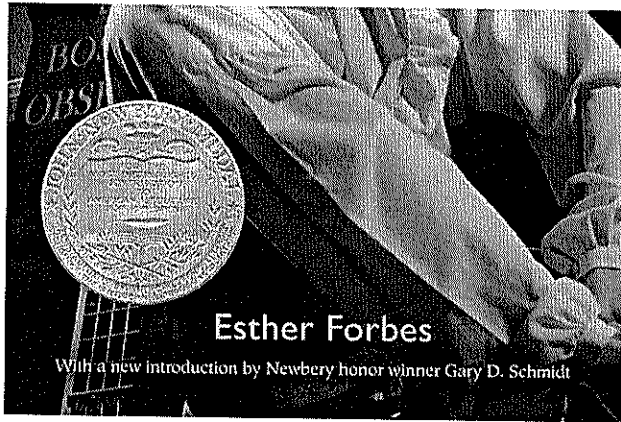


Title: *Johnny Tremain*

Author: Esther Forbes

Overview: Set in the 1770s, the story of Johnny Tremain, a 14-year-old orphan, is a dramatic one, focusing on his involvement in the Revolutionary War and the impact it has on his life.

Awards: 1944 John Newbery



Medal

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin
Harcourt

Publication Date: 1943, 2011

ISBN: 9780547614328

Johnny Tremain by Esther Forbes, Newbery Medal
Winner. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

02 Across Five Aprils

of 13



Title: *Across Five Aprils*

Author: Irene Hunt

Overview: This novel covers five years in the life of young Jethro Creighton and focuses on how the Civil War impacts life for Jethro, from the age of 9 to 14, and his family on their southern Illinois farm.

Awards: Five, including recognition as a 1965 Newbery Honor Book

Publisher: Berkley

Publication Date: 1964, 2002

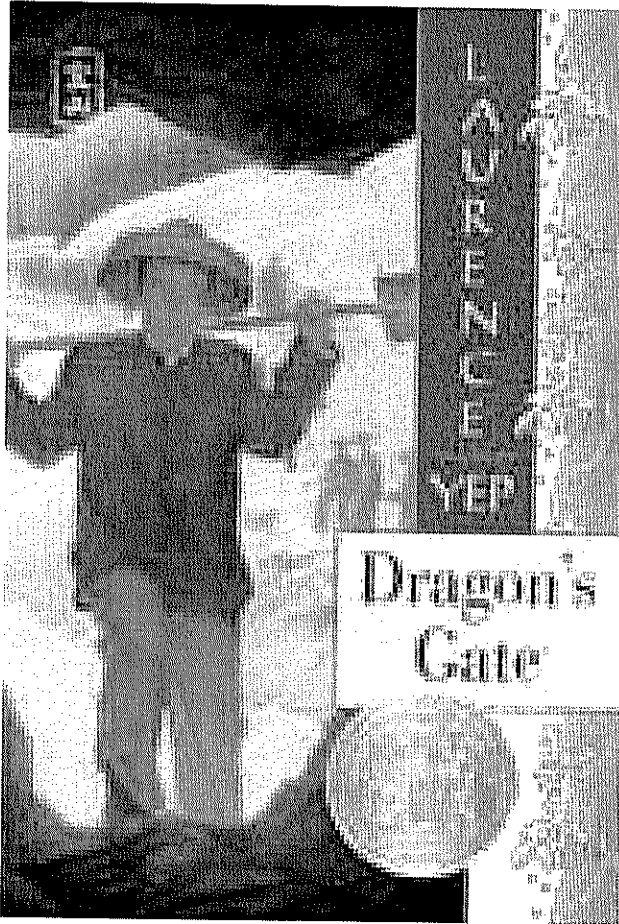
ISBN: 9780425182789



Penguin

03 Dragon's Gate

of 13



HarperCollins

Title: *Dragon's Gate*

Author: Laurence Yep

Overview: Set in and around 1867, this coming-of-age story combines Chinese and United States (particularly California) history in the tale of Otter, a 14-year-old Chinese boy who is forced to flee his country and join his father and uncle in California. There his unrealistic expectations of life in the U.S. come up against the reality of the Chinese immigrants' harsh experiences there.

Awards: 1994 Newbery Honor Book

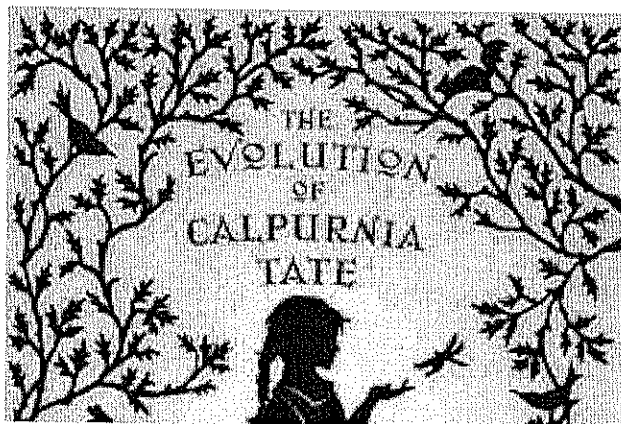
Publisher: HarperCollins

Publication Date: 2001

ISBN: 9780064404891

04 The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate

of 13



Title: *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate*

Author: Jacqueline Kelly

Overview: Set in Texas in 1899, this is the story of spunky Calpurnia Tate who is more interested in science and nature than in learning



Henry Holt

to be a lady and her life with her family, which includes six brothers.

Awards: Newbery Honor Book, several state awards

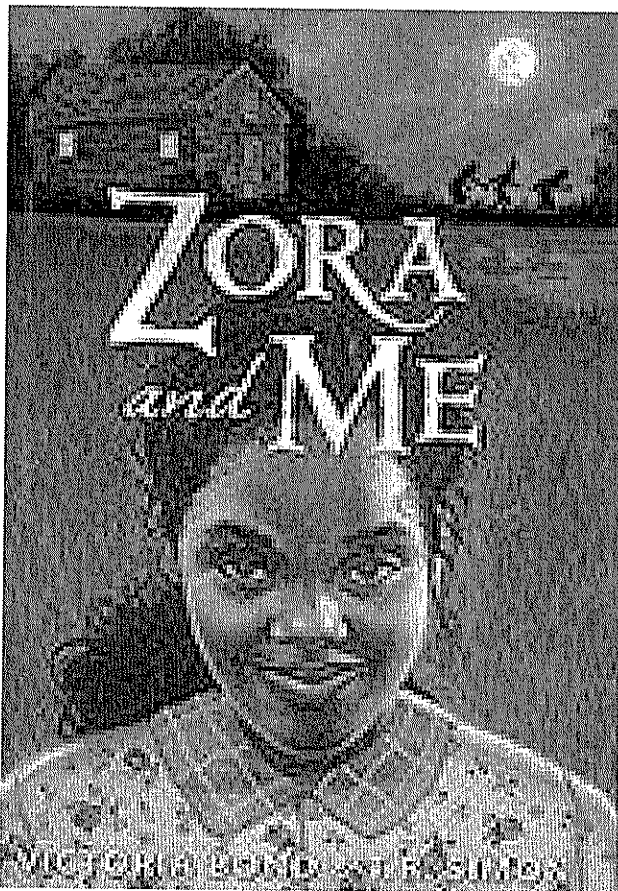
Publisher: Henry Holt

Publication Date: 2009

ISBN: 9780805088410

05 Zora and Me

of 13



Candlewick Press

Title: *Zora and Me*

Author: Victoria Bond and T.R. Simon

Overview: This novel is based on the childhood of author and folklorist Zora Neale Hurston. It takes place around 1900, during the year Hurston was in the fourth grade and living (and telling stories) in Eatonville, an all-black community in Florida.

Awards: 2011 Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award for New Talent; also endorsed by the Zora Neale Hurston Trust

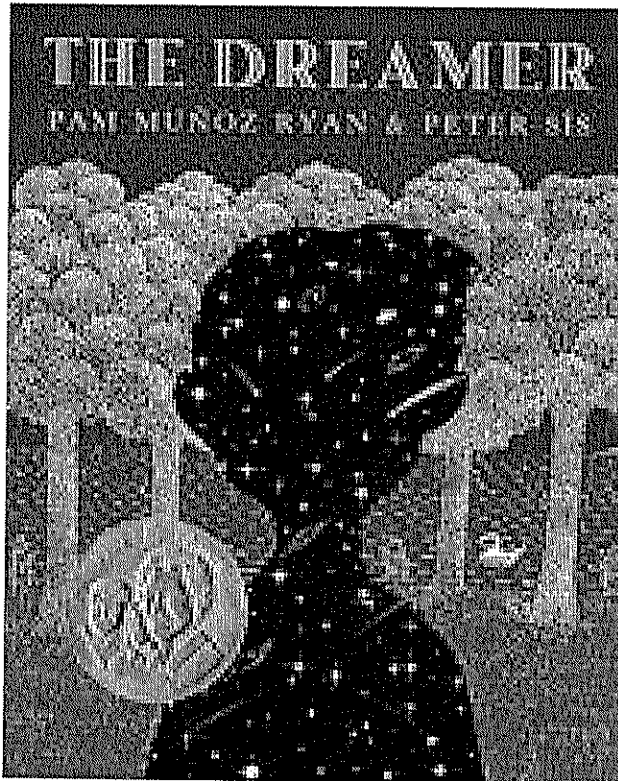
Publisher: Candlewick Press

Publication Date: 2010

ISBN: 97800763643003

06 The Dreamer

of 13



Title: *The Dreamer*

Author: Pam Munoz Ryan

Overview: This novel by Pam Munoz Ryan is based on the life of Chilean poet Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) and tells how a sickly boy whose father wants him to go into business becomes, instead, a beloved poet.

Awards: 2011 Pura Belpre Author Award

Publisher: Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic, Inc.

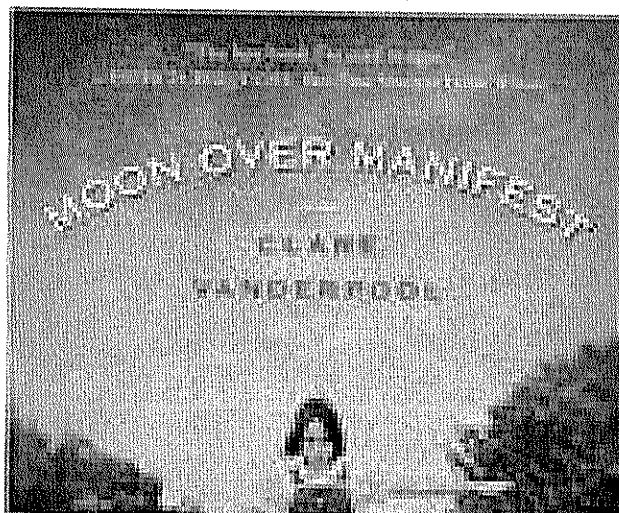
Publication Date: 2010

ISBN: 9780439269704

The Dreamer by Pam Munoz Ryan.

07 Moon Over Manifest

of 13



Title: *Moon Over Manifest*

Author: Clare Vanderpool

Overview: The story, which is set in southeast Kansas during the Depression, moves between 1936 when 12-year-old Abilene Tucker comes to Manifest, Kansas, and 1918 during her father's youth there and includes mysteries and the



search for home.

Awards: 2011 John Newbery Medal, 2011 Spur Award for Best Western Juvenile Fiction from the Western Writers of America

Publisher: Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Random House, Inc.

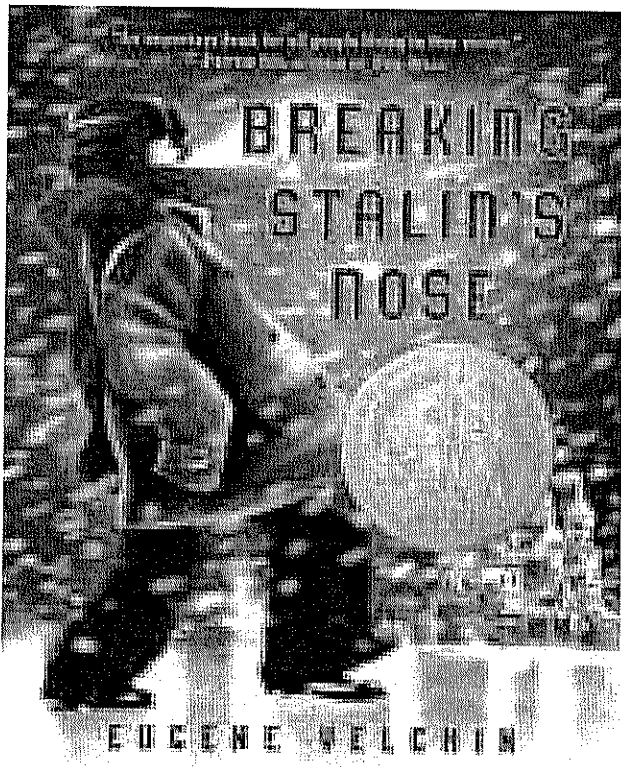
Publication Date: 2010

ISBN: 9780385738835

Moon Over Manifest by Clare Vanderpool, 2011 Newbery Medal Winner. Random House

08 Breaking Stalin's Nose

of 13



Macmillan

Title: *Breaking Stalin's Nose*

Author: Eugene Yelchin

Overview: *Breaking Stalin's Nose* is set in 1930s Moscow where 10-year-old Sasha is eagerly looking forward to the next day when he will become a Young Pioneer, demonstrating his loyalty to his country and to Joseph Stalin, his hero. Over the tumultuous course of two days, Sasha's life, and his perception of Stalin, change as members of Stalin's Secret Service take his father away and Sasha finds himself rejected by those he goes to for help. It's up to him to

decide what he should do next.

Awards: Include 2012 Newbery Honor Book and 2012 Top Ten Historical Fiction for Youth, Booklist.

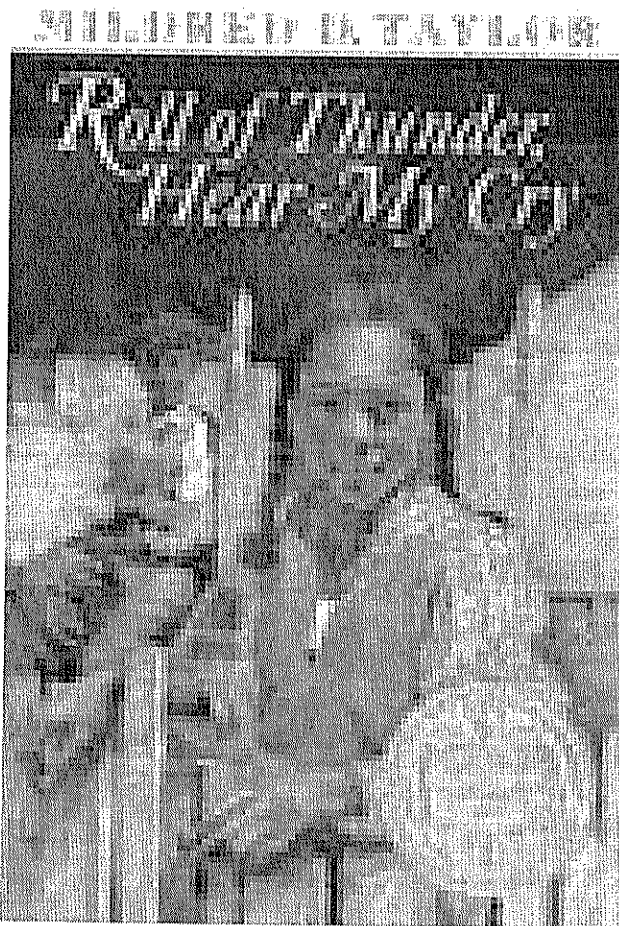
Publisher: Henry Holt and Company, Macmillan

Publication Date: 2011

ISBN: 9780805092165

09 Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

of 13



Title: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*

Author: Mildred D. Taylor

Overview: One of eight books about the Logan family based on the author's family history, the novel focuses on the hardships the black farming family faces in Mississippi during the Depression.

Awards: 1977 John Newbery Medal, Boston Globe-Horn Book Award Honor Book

Publisher: Penguin

Publication Date: 1976, 2001

ISBN: 9780803726475

Read the review of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*.

Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry. Penguin

10
of 13

Countdown, Book 1 The Sixties Trilogy: 3 Novels of the 1960s for Young Readers



Title: *Countdown*, Book 1 The Sixties Trilogy: 3 Novels of the 1960s for Young Readers

Author: Deborah Wiles

Overview: The first in a trilogy, this novel is about an 11-year-old girl and her family in 1962, during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Photos and other artifacts from the time period add to the book's appeal.

Awards: Publisher's Weekly Best Book of the Year, 2010

Publisher: Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic, Inc., 2010

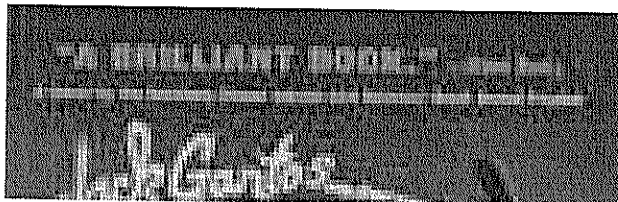
Publication Date: 2010

ISBN: 9780545106054

Countdown, historical fiction, by Deborah Wiles.
Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic

11 Dead End in Norvelt

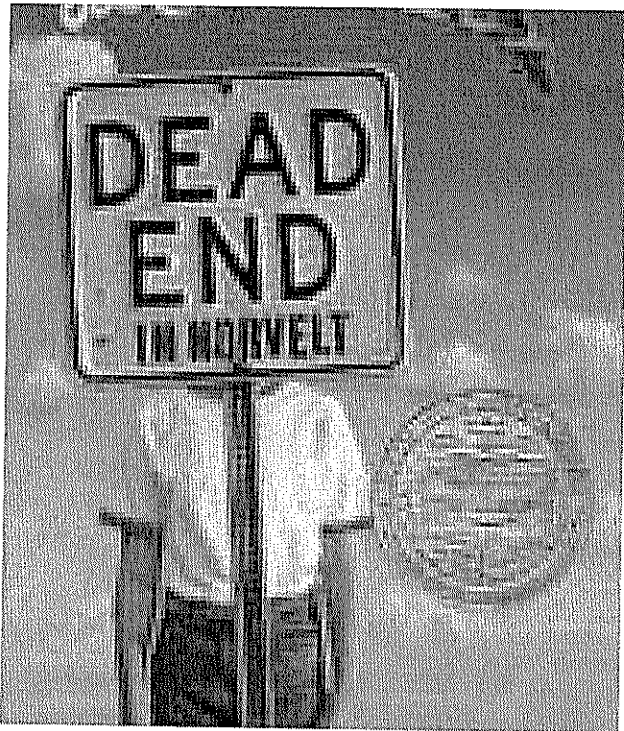
of 13



Title: *Dead End in Norvelt*

Author: Jack Gantos

Overview: Set in Norvelt,



Farrar, Straus and Giroux, an imprint of Macmillan Publishers

ISBN: 9780374379933.

12 One Crazy Summer

of 13



Pennsylvania, Gantos uses his own childhood experiences and his vivid imagination to create the story of 12-year-old Jack Gantos in the summer of 1962. Gantos combines appealing characters, mysteries, small town adventures, humor, history and life lessons to create a novel that will appeal to kids 10-14. **Awards:** 2012 Scott O'Dell Award winner for young people's historical fiction and the 2012 John Newbery Medal for children's literature for the novel.

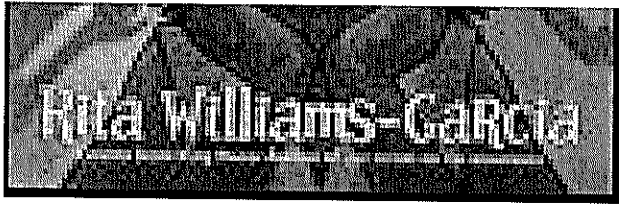
Publisher: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, an imprint of Macmillan Publishers
Publication Date: 2012

Title: *One Crazy Summer*

Author: Rita Williams-Garcia

Overview: Set in the 1960s, this novel is unusual in that it focuses on the Black Panther movement in the context of one African American family and the summer three sisters, who have been raised by their father and grandmother, visit their mother in California where she is involved in the Black Panther movement.

Awards: 2011 Scott O'Dell Prize for Historical Fiction, 2011 Coretta

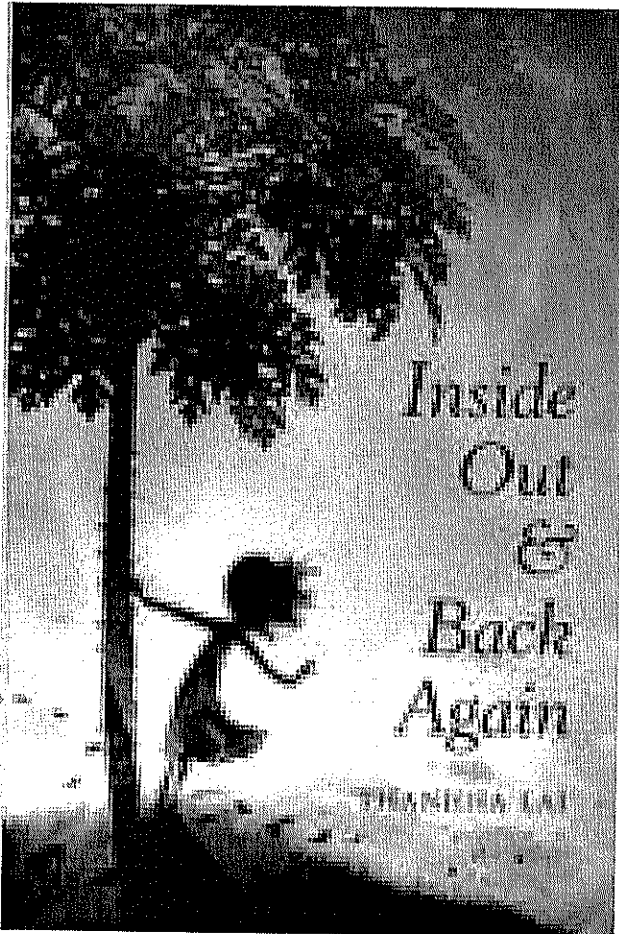


Amistad, an imprint of HarperCollins

Scott King Author Award, 2011
Newbery Honor Book
Publisher: Amistad, an imprint of
HarperCollins Publishers
Publication Date: 2010
ISBN: 9780060760885

13 Inside Out and Back Again

of 13



HarperCollins

Title: *Inside Out & Back Again*
Author: Thanhha Lai
Overview: This novel by Thanhha Lai is based on her life, leaving Vietnam in the mid-'70s when she was 10 and the difficult adjustment to life in the United States.
Awards: 2011 National Book Award for Young People's Literature
Publisher: HarperCollins
Publication Date: 2011
ISBN: 9780061962783
Read the [review of Inside Out & Back Again.](#)

CITE