

Favorite Picture Books

Four picture books in 2015 stood out in my mind as exceptional. All four contain stunning illustrations that enrich each story.

A black cat and a small boy explore the darkness before dawn in *The Night World* by Mordicai Gerstein. The pair are rendered in black acrylic on grey paper as they move from the shadowy dark house to the porch and out into the mysterious night. They wait...something is about to happen...then slowly it does...the light of morning brings promise to a colorful new day. This is sure to become a bedtime favorite.

The Bear Ate Your Sandwich by Julia Sarcone-Roach is a charming tale told by a little tattle tale revealed at the end. Drawn by the scent of ripe strawberries, a bear hops into the back of a truck and discovers the city, and his antics delight young children. Spying a lunchbox on a park bench, as he helps himself, he realizes he has been seen, hops a tugboat and rides back into the forest.

The art and music of Cuba are central to this story of a young girl with a love and talent for playing drums in a society forbidding her to participate. *Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music* by Margarita Engle and illustrated by Rafael Lopez, shares 10 year old Millo Castro Zaldarriaga's story in free verse. Brave enough to follow her dream, she became a world famous musician. The acrylic illustrations are a perfect tribute to the colors, textures and rhythms of the story.

"What did I have to lose? There was nothing they could do to me...there was nothing they could take from me any longer." Carole Weatherford's words touch your heart in her biography of Fannie Lou Hamer. *Voice of Freedom, Fannie Lou Hamer: Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement*, begins with her birth to sharecropper parents in the Mississippi Delta and follows her tenacious activism, leading to her address at the 1964 Democratic party convention during a controversy seating black delegates, Hamer's heroism and struggle became an acknowledged inspiration for other major leaders of the civil rights movement. Collage artist Ekua Holmes' breathtaking images provide a moving portrayal of her life and leadership.