

# younger readers

For Kids, Young Adults, and Children of All Ages

BY WENDY MASS



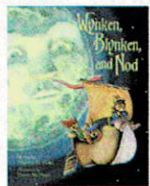
Literary scholar William Zinsser wrote, “No kind of writing lodges itself so deeply in our memory, echoing there for the rest of our lives, as the books that we met in our childhood.” With that in mind, we have started asking a few favorite children and teens’ authors what they loved to read when *they* were young. Our first responses are included below.

## Children

AGES 0-8

### WYNKEN BLYNKEN AND NOD

By Eugene W. Field, illustrated by David McPhail



*Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night sailed off in a wooden shoe, sailed down a river of crystal-light, and into a sea of dew ...*

So begins Field’s bedtime rhyme, written over one hundred years ago, and originally called “Dutch Lullaby.” In McPhail’s interpretation, three seafaring bunnies travel across the sky in a wooden shoe collecting stars from the sky. In the end we learn that the three are really a child’s two eyes (Wynken and Blynken) and a head (Nod), and the shoe is really her wooden trundle bed.

**“McPhail sets the stage for a likely bedtime ritual, replete with reciting and relishing this still-perfect poem. Absolutely lovely.”** KIRKUS (STARRED REVIEW)

**“A peaceful, soothing interpretation that will appeal to those looking to recreate a world of innocence.”** PUBLISHERS

WEEKLY

### THE BOY ON FAIRFIELD STREET

By Kathleen Krull, illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher



Imagine if young Theodore Geisel (Dr. Seuss) had listened to his art teacher who told him to give up drawing. The world would never have gotten to know star-bellied sneeches or Horton the Elephant or Sam’s dislike of green eggs and ham. Coinciding with the 100-year anniversary of Geisel’s birth, this biography takes the young reader on an illustrated journey through the spirited Geisel’s youth, where his passion for drawing bizarre creatures led him to doodle everywhere, including his bedroom walls. The book ends in Geisel’s 20s, when his life as Dr. Seuss begins. For the older reader, a long afterword fleshes out the rest of Seuss’s life and career. The book also includes an extended bibliography.

**“Featured in spot art, familiar Seuss characters frolic through these pages, thematically complementing the illustrations while reminding readers why Geisel’s life is worth celebrating.”**

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

**“This picture-book biography is a winner....Krull’s work is a terrific look at the boyhood of one of the most beloved**

**author/illustrators of the 20th century.”**

ANNE CHAPMAN CALLAGHAN, SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL

## Intermediate

AGES 9-12

### THE OUTCASTS OF 19 SCHUYLER PLACE

By E. L. Konigsburg



Fans of Konigsburg’s 2000 novel *Silent to the Bone* will remember feisty Margaret Rose Kane. She was an adult in that story; here she is 12 years old and just as spirited. Rescued from a miserable summer at sleepaway camp, she goes to stay with two beloved and eccentric great-uncles. When the town threatens to dismantle three giant towers of scrap metal that the uncles spent 45 years constructing in their backyard, Margaret rushes to the rescue to save what she believes are priceless pieces of history.

**“There are a handful of authors writing for pre- and early-teen readers whose books are so quirkily original, so airily intelligent, that a single paragraph can make a jaded reviewer’s spirits rise.... E.L. Konigsburg won the Newbery medal in 1968 for *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* and again 29 years later for *The View From Saturday*. Konigsburg’s latest could make her a triple winner.”** ELIZABETH WARD,

THE WASHINGTON POST



**"Rarely have the horrors of girls' camp been so delectably delineated: the treacly sweet control freak of a camp director, the endless group activities, the vileness of a gang of bullying queen bees and alpha girls....Outcasts is a beautifully written, witty tale with subtle, sometimes sardonic and bittersweet elements."** DEIRDRE DONAHUE, USA TODAY

### SAHARA SPECIAL

By Esme Raji Codell



Instead of completing her school assignments, fifth-grader and budding writer Sahara Jones composes letters to her father, who has abandoned the family. She comments on life in a diary, hiding its pages in the stacks of the public library. Soon her unsent letters are discovered at school, her grades decline, and it is not until a new teacher takes an interest that Sahara learns what she already knew—that she is special after all.

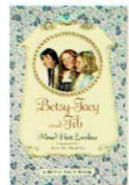
**"[Codell] perfectly captures the patois of her inner-city class and the behavior of fifth-graders anywhere. She has created wonderful characters that you can't help but root for and wonder what will happen for them next."** NATALIE SOTO, ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

**"Sahara is sweeter than Harriet the Spy, as needy and engaging as Ramona, and is sure to be a character whom children will want to read about and get to know. Codell's take on fifth graders, teachers, Special Needs students, and mothers is very funny, and underneath the humor glows real warmth and love."** LINDA BECK, SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL

### BETSY-TACY, AND TIB SERIES

By Maud Hart Lovelace

★ RECOMMENDED BY JUDY BLUME, WHOSE LATEST OFFERING FOR KIDS IS **DOUBLE FUDGE**.



Judy Blume doesn't hesitate when asked what her favorite childhood book was. "The Betsy-Tacy books," she declares. "We all wanted to be

Betsy." The 10-book series, originally published in the 1940s and '50s, relates the adventures of three spunky friends, Betsy, Tacy, and Tib. The series begins when the girls first meet in turn-of-the-last-century Minnesota and follows their friendship from age five until Betsy gets married. These works were, in Blume's generation, an integral part of growing up. In new

editions by HarperCollins, children today can finally see what their mothers and grandmothers are waxing nostalgic over.

**"Maud Hart Lovelace is in the process of becoming one of the best accepted of contemporary writers in the field of youth reading."** THOMAS EDWARDS, MANKATO FREE PRESS, 9/19/51

### AS IF BEING JUST A TEENAGER WASN'T HARD ENOUGH

There has been a deluge recently of high-quality books for teenagers featuring a gay or lesbian main character. Here are four that stand out.

#### KEEPING YOU A SECRET

By Julie Anne Peters



Holland has plenty of friends, a loving boyfriend, and is headed to college next year. What she didn't plan on was falling in love with another girl, especially one who wears her sexuality proudly on her t-shirts. When her mother finds out, she literally kicks her out of the house. The Gay Resource Center helps her get on her feet and, with the help of her girlfriend, she finds the strength to be herself.

#### KISSING KATE

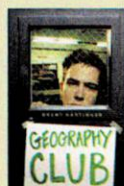
By Lauren Myracle



Sixteen-year-old Lissa is ecstatic when her long-time best friend Kate kisses her at a party, but crushed when Kate later acts like it never happened. Desperate to salvage their relationship, Lissa must learn that Kate is never going to be the person that Lissa wants her to be. With the help of a new friend and adventures with lucid dreaming, she can finally let Kate go.

#### GEOGRAPHY CLUB

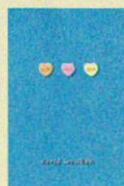
By Brent Hartinger



Russel is a well-adjusted high school sophomore in a small town. After discovering the presence of a handful of other gay and lesbian students in his school, he and his newfound friends decide to create a safe haven for themselves. To protect their identities, they call themselves the Geography Club, since "no high school students in their right minds would ever join that." But even safe havens are subject to peer pressure and outside forces. Russel loses his first love, but gains a new strength and understanding of how to be true to his friends and to himself.

#### BOY MEETS BOY

By David Levithan

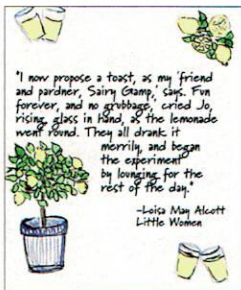


Levithan set out to write "a dippy happy gay teen book"—and that he has. High school sophomore Paul lives in a modern day Gaytopia. In his New Jersey suburb, gay and straight students mix happily, and the cross-dressing homecoming queen is also the star quarterback. Unencumbered by the real-life worries and fears of a gay teenager, Paul can focus his considerable energy on what really matters—falling in love.

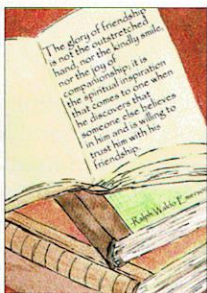


# notecards

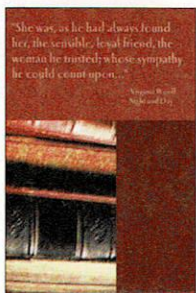
We selected a few of our favorite passages from great works of literature to create beautiful, literary notecards. These cards were hand-designed by a local artist exclusively for *Bookmarks* and are printed on beautiful, textured cotton stock. The cards are blank inside, with plenty of space to write a masterwork of your own.



from *Little Women*  
by Louisa May Alcott



by Ralph Waldo  
Emerson



from *Night and Day*  
by Virginia Woolf

Other quotes and designs are available at our web site. An assortment of 10 cards of various designs is also available for \$14.95.

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## Young Adults AGES 13 AND UP

### ALLEGRA MAUD GOLDMAN

by Edith Konecky

★ RECOMMENDED BY YOURS TRULY, WENDY MASS.



On page one, Allegra Maud Goldman describes her own birth: "What could they have been thinking, naming me Allegra? I entered screaming and I'll go out likewise." Allegra's frank and often hysterically funny observations on life, sex, death, and growing up misunderstood and under appreciated in her pre-WW II Brooklyn family have charmed readers since the book's release in 1976. It's a good thing that The Feminist Press at CUNY (City University of New York) reissued the paperback, because my copy is falling to pieces.

"One of those rare delights, a novel of childhood...that is as wise and true as it is funny." MS. MAGAZINE

"Many, many readers are going to recognize just what [Allegra's] going through and share it with pleasure."

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, 1976

### GREEN ANGEL

By Alice Hoffman



In this tale of magic realism, 15-year-old Green instinctively knows the needs of the plants in her garden. Suddenly, her beloved parents and sisters die in a fire that ravages the nearby city where they sell their produce. Green's world is literally destroyed and covered with ash. Left alone with her guilt that her last words to her family hadn't been nicer, she tattoos her skin and renames herself Ash. With the help of other survivors, Ash learns to carve out a new reality for herself until she can heal enough to become Green again.

"This new offering from adult novelist Alice Hoffman is a haunting,

beautiful post-9/11 fairy tale for our time. Hoffman's tale has the visceral effect of a fairy tale on the reader's consciousness, more powerful than most realistic renderings of current tragedies." DEAN SCHNEIDER, CHILDREN'S BOOKPAGE

"Hoffman has created a multilayered, believable protagonist. ... The contrast between her original faith in the promise of the future and her later acknowledgment of the tentative nature of reality is vividly and eloquently portrayed." RENEE STEINBERG,

SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL

### THE BELL JAR

By Sylvia Plath

★ RECOMMENDED BY MEGAN MCCAFFERTY, WHOSE LATEST NOVEL FOR TEENS IS *SECOND HELPINGS*.



Megan McCafferty, who burst onto the teen lit scene in 2001 with *Sloppy Firsts*, claims that by reading *The Bell Jar* as a teenager, "I learned that my life wasn't nearly as screwed up as I thought it was!" Plath's quasi-autobiographical novel delves into the psyche of an ambitious and witty young woman who descends, quite suddenly, into madness. College student Esther Greenwood shows us life beset by mental illness, forcing us to feel what she's going through. The sense of compassion that the narrator evokes will serve today's teen readers well.

"By turns funny, harrowing, crude, ardent and artless. Its most notable quality is an astonishing immediacy, like a series of snapshots taken at high noon." TIME MAGAZINE

"Esther Greenwood's account of her years in the bell jar is as clear and readable as it is witty and disturbing....[This] is not a potboiler, nor a series of ungrateful caricatures: it is literature." NEW YORK TIMES ■