

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

International Literacy Association Honors Outstanding Books for Children and Young Adults

NEWARK, DE | July 1, 2025—The International Literacy Association (ILA) proudly announces the recipients of its 2025 Children's and Young Adult Book Awards. These awards honor newly published authors who demonstrate exceptional talent in literature for children and young adults, with a focus on authentic stories that connect with readers around the globe.

This year's selected titles uplift powerful voices and explore themes of identity, resilience, heritage, and human connection.

Primary Category

Fiction Winner:

I Lived Inside a Whale (2024) by Xin Li (Little, Brown Ink)

A stirring and visually captivating story of transformation and discovery that invites young readers to explore feelings of belonging and change.

Fiction Honor:

This Table (2024) by Alex Killian; illustrated by Brooke Smart (Greystone Kids)

A lyrical tribute to intergenerational connection, memory, and the everyday magic of shared spaces.

Nonfiction Winner:

One Day This Tree Will Fall (2024) by Leslie Barnard Booth; illustrated by Stephanie Fizer Coleman (Simon & Schuster)

A meditative, richly illustrated ode to the natural cycle of life, grounded in science and wonder.

Nonfiction Honor:

The Girl Who Figured It Out: The Inspiring True Story of Wheelchair Athlete Minda Dentler Becoming an Ironman World Champion (2024) by Minda Dentler; illustrated by Stephanie Dehennin (Sourcebooks)

An empowering account of perseverance, athleticism, and disability representation from an acclaimed athlete and advocate.

Intermediate Category

Fiction Winner:

Kwame Crashes the Underworld (2024) by Craig Kofi Farmer (Square Fish)

A bold and inventive adventure inspired by myth and cultural legacy, brimming with humor and heart.

Fiction Honor:

Mani Semilla Finds Her Quetzal Voice (2024) by Anna Lapera (Levine Querido)
A poignant coming-of-age story steeped in cultural tradition and personal awakening.

Nonfiction Winner:

Tales of Ancient Egypt: Myths & Adventures from the Land of the Pyramids (2024) by Hugo D. Cook; illustrated by Sona Avedikian (Neon Squid)

A beautifully packaged introduction to Egyptian mythology, weaving scholarship and storytelling.

Nonfiction Honor:

Hike It: An Introduction to Camping, Hiking, and Backpacking through the U.S.A. (2024) by Iron Tazz; illustrated by Martin Stanev (Magic Cat Publishing)

An engaging guide to the great outdoors that encourages curiosity, confidence, and respect for nature.

Young Adult Category**Fiction Winner:**

Libertad (2024) by Bessie Flores Zaldívar (Penguin Young Readers)

A searing, lyrical novel that navigates political unrest, personal identity, and the meaning of freedom.

Fiction Honor:

A Second Chance on Earth (2024) by Juan Vidal (Peachtree Publishers)

A redemptive tale of growth, grief, and self-discovery that challenges the boundaries of forgiveness.

Nonfiction Winner:

Bless the Blood: A Cancer Memoir (2024) by Walela Nehanda (Penguin Young Readers)

An unflinching and poetic account of illness, activism, and survival from one of today's most resonant voices.

Live Webcast

A live webinar to discuss these new voices in children's and young adult literature will be held on Wednesday, August 20, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. ET. The webcast may be accessed on ILA's website at www.literacyworldwide.org/meetings-events/ila-digital-events and will be available on-demand.

For more information and a full list of past winners, visit literacyworldwide.org/awards.

About the International Literacy Association

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a global advocacy and membership organization dedicated to advancing literacy for all through its network of more than 300,000 literacy educators, researchers, and experts across 75 countries. With over 60 years of experience, ILA has set the standard for how literacy is defined, taught, and evaluated. ILA collaborates with partners across the world to develop, gather, and disseminate high-quality resources, best practices, and cutting-edge research to empower educators, inspire students, and inform policymakers. ILA publishes *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, and [Reading Research Quarterly](http://www.literacyworldwide.org/reading-research-quarterly), which are peer reviewed and edited by leaders in the field. For more information, visit literacyworldwide.org.