children’s books ireland
reading list

POLITICS AND ACTIVISM

AGE RANGE 0–YA
About Children’s Books Ireland

At Children’s Books Ireland, we believe that every child should have access to the joy of reading, regardless of their circumstances. Our mission is to make books central to every child’s life on the island of Ireland. We work with families, teachers, libraries, publishers and communities all across the island to get books into children’s hands and to inform adults who can make a big impact on their reading. We advocate for the changes Ireland needs to grow a new generation of readers, and we support artists so that they can make excellent work for children and young people. Sign up to our newsletter to stay in touch!

About this themed book list

This is a curated list of titles our expert reviewers recommend under the assigned theme. It is by no means an exhaustive list and we have tried, where possible, to include a spread across age ranges and genres under the theme. Our policy is to include titles dating from five years to date in English and ten years to date in the Irish language. Any titles by an Irish author, illustrator, publisher or in the Irish language will be denoted with a shamrock. After initial publication, these lists will be revisited annually and updated with new titles where suitable. Go to childrensbooksireland.ie for more themed book lists and resources.
CHRIS NAYLOR-BALLESTEROS
THE SUITCASE

The Suitcase is a simple tale with a huge idea. When a stranger arrives in a new land with his suitcase, the doubtful locals have questions. When the answers fail to satisfy, the locals break open the suitcase while the stranger sleeps. After a spell of guilt, the locals understand just what they can do to make the stranger welcome. The loose black line illustrations utilise saturated secondary colour to underscore the message. This is a story of acceptance and understanding. (Age 0–4)

BRITTA TECKENTRUP
WE ARE TOGETHER

‘We can change the world / With the power of words. / Let’s all rock the boat / So our voices are heard!’ As the two children in this story engage in various wholesome outdoor activities – flying kites, watching birds, sailing – the cutouts in the pages reveal more and more children joining them, forming a circle and then ‘one big happy crowd’ by the end. This diverse cast is set against a variety of rich, beautiful backdrops, emphasising both our shared humanity and our shared habitat. (Age 0–4)

DAVE EGGERS illustrated by SHAWN HARRIS
WHAT CAN A CITIZEN DO?
CHRONICLE BOOKS 2018 (HBK) 40PP £12.99 ISBN 9781452173139

Eggers uses verse and simple ideas to help children understand what it means to be a (good) citizen. With so much upheaval in the world, this book is a welcome reminder of the importance of taking care of others, accepting other people’s differences and taking action to make positive change happen. Harris uses cut-paper and collage to wonderful effect throughout, creating hopeful scenes featuring children from different ethnicities and different religions. The illustrations alone will give readers lots to talk about. (Age 0–4, 5–8)

LORNA GUTIERREZ illustrated by POLLY NOAKES
DARE

Filled with messages and images of empowerment, Dare is a richly diverse and charming story seeking to inspire young readers to embrace their true selves. Daring the reader to dream, trust and aspire to do their best, the book reminds us of the importance of reaching out, speaking out and being a shining light in the darkness. Accompanied by playful illustrations that capture the way a child’s imagination moulds the world around them, this story is a mantra to be embraced by readers of all ages. (Age 0–4, 5–8)
CHANA EWING illustrated by PAULINA MORGAN

AN ABC OF EQUALITY

FRANCES LINCOLN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2019 (BOARD) 52PP £12.99 ISBN 9781786037428

‘A is for Ability’, ‘B is for Belief’, ‘C is for Class’. All people have the right to be treated fairly, no matter who they are, what they look like, or where they come from. *An ABC of Equality* introduces complicated concepts surrounding social justice using simple, clear language, accessible to the youngest of children. Bright, uncluttered illustrations convey a lot of the message and show a wonderfully diverse cast of characters. A great conversation starter with very young readers! (Non-fiction, Age 3–6)

SIMON JAMES

DEAR GREENPEACE

WALKER BOOKS 2016 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781406367409

Emily is terribly worried that the whale in her pond might be ill or hurt. So she writes to Greenpeace. They write back! Offering the best advice, Greenpeace firmly insists that a whale could not possibly be living in her pond. But Emily persists, determined to give Arthur (the whale) the very best care until she can finally set him free. Chock-full of information, this gentle, fancifully illustrated story creates a heart-warming space for children to explore their concerns for wildlife. Simply beautiful! (Age 3–6)

KATE MILNER

IT’S A NO-MONEY DAY


Milner is the recent winner of two prestigious illustration awards, and this book is indicative of her work. Her illustrations are layered and delicate with warm, sensitive colour. During a ‘no-money’ day, a mother and child go to the foodbank and play the ‘one day’ game. A powerful scene at the foodbank shows how the entire fabric of society has been affected by economic recession. This poignant story shows that even a family affected by poverty can remain hopeful. (Age 4–8)

PAUL CZAJAK illustrated by RASHIN KHEIRIYEH

THE BOOK TREE


*The Book Tree* tells the story of a town where the mayor has decided that books are dangerous and he doesn’t trust them. Arlo, the hero of the story, is determined to restore order. And so, he starts to write his own stories. From this one act, a book tree flourishes. A timely allegory, an ode to activists and a hymn to the power of story. Multi-award-winning illustrator Rashin Kheiriyeh paints up a storm to bring this lovely tale to life. (Age 5–8)
NICOLA DAVIES illustrated by REBECCA COBB
THE DAY WAR CAME
WALKER BOOKS 2018 (HBK) 32PP £10.00 ISBN 9781406376326

The day war came started like any other day, but nothing was ever the same after that. Following a young child through terror, despair and exile, this pulls no punches in showing the plight of unaccompanied children fleeing war. Davies’s text is simple, stark and just as strong in what it doesn’t say. Cobb’s powerful illustrations show the unsaid and hint at the unsayable. A tough and important read that concludes with an appeal for empathy and a hopeful note, in spite of everything. (Age 5–8)

OLIVER JEFFERS
THE FATE OF FAUSTO

Fausto wants to own everything he sees: the flowers, the trees, the mountains and the seas. Young readers will be drawn to Fausto’s silly temper tantrums, but this darkly comic tale will have an enduring depth and resonance for its readers as they age and begin to see Fausto’s greed and hubris in the world around them. Less richly detailed than many of Jeffers’s other works, but this restraint is used to great effect as the illustrations emphasise scale, status, obsolescence and wisdom. (Age 5–8)

MAURICIO NEGRO
COLOUR OF PEOPLE
LITTLE ISLAND BOOKS 2018 (PBK) 32PP €10.00 ISBN 9781912417070

Originally published in Brazil, this wordless picturebook explores race and diversity through a series of paired images. Here are two children – one dark skinned, one light skinned – and here they are again angry. The white child is now red, and in the next image – where both are freezing cold – blue. We work our way through the rainbow until returning to the original peach, with our sense of ‘flesh coloured’ hopefully completely turned on its head. Playful without being didactic, this is one every school library should have. (Age 5–8)

SOPHIE SIERS illustrated by ANNE VILLENEUVE
DEAR MR PRESIDENT

Sam has to share a bedroom with his big brother and he hates it. When he hears the US president talking on TV about building a wall, he enthusiastically embraces this simple solution as his own, and begins writing to POTUS to tell him of his plans and ask for advice. Sam’s correspondence remains one-sided, but his dilemma initiates some interesting conversations with his teacher and his parents about walls throughout history that have kept people in and out. Brilliant! (Age 5–8)
**ZAZI, ZIWELENE and ZINDZI MANDELA illustrated by SEAN QUALLS**  
**GRANDAD MANDELA**  
LINCOLN CHILDREN’S BOOKS 2018 (HBK) 40PP £12.99 ISBN 9781786031365

*Grandad Mandela* meanders through the life and times of the South African icon as his real-life great-grandchildren quiz their Grandma Zindzi about their famous relative. The personal approach and conversational tone make the topic accessible, but at times raise the issues of balance and objectivity. Expect outrage at the description of the unfair apartheid system and plenty of questions concerning context and chronology. Sean Qualls’s collage illustrations combine acrylic paint and coloured pencils to great effect, exposing the grit and gravitas of the events recounted. (Non-fiction, Age 5–8, 8–10)

**RÉ Ó LAIGHLÉIS**  
**OSAMA, OBAMA, Ó, A MHAMA!**  
MÓINÍN 2010 (BOG) 60PP €8.50 ISBN 9780956492623

Scéal spreagúil dea-scríofa atá bunaithe ar théacsteachaí a imíonn ar strae is ár chruthaíonn géarchéim idirnáisiúnta nuair a fhaigheann an duine mícheart é. Is léir go bhfuil an buachaill óg a scríobh é go hiomlán aineolach ar an ruaille buaille ar fad atá cruthaithe aige! Téann baill den CIA i mbun fiosruithe ach an leor an meaísín rianádóireachta atá acu chun an fhírinne a aimsiú? Leis na ccoileachtaí a úsáideann, bheadh déagóir ar bith gafa leis! (Aois 8–10, 10–12)

**BERNADETTE RUSSELL illustrated by DAVID BROADBENT**  
**BE THE CHANGE, MAKE IT HAPPEN**  

The subtitle of this bright and important book is ‘Big and Small Ways Kids Can Make a Difference’ and that’s exactly what is on offer here. From cake sales and happiness diaries to voluntary tidy-towns endeavours and acts of kindness, Russell has lots of doable ideas for her readers to get involved in their mission to make the world a better place. Looking at the environment, inclusive community living, animal protection, mental wellbeing, gender stereotyping, etc., this is an upbeat, empowering and fun read. (Non-fiction, Age 8–10, 10–12)

**ELLEN BAILEY illustrated by SOPHIE BEER**  
**I AM A WONDER WOMAN**  

This biographical anthology quite literally encourages readers to take action: it’s an activity book. There’s one for each wonderful woman – e.g. how to make a book with the Brontë sisters, and an example of Jane Goodall’s chimp sign language. It’s a good way of going from page to practice. Some of the more surprising activities include making an algorithm like Ada Lovelace to design a cheese sandwich recipe, or answering a questionnaire to determine whether you could be a spy like Brita Tott. (Non-fiction, Age 9–11)
ANNA CAREY
THE MAKING OF MOLLIE
THE O'BRIEN PRESS 2016 (PBK) 304PP €8.99 ISBN 9781847178473

The year is 1912 and Mollie Carberry lives with her family in the North Dublin suburb of Drumcondra. It is a time of social change and Mollie’s older sister, Peggy, and the family’s maid, Maggie, support the suffragette cause. Mollie and her friend Nora also become converted to it. When the grown-up suffrage campaign takes on a militant approach, Peggy and Maggie face serious consequences for their actions. The story is beautifully written as a series of letters between Mollie and her friend Frances. (Age 9–11)

ONJALI Q RAÚF
THE BOY AT THE BACK OF THE CLASS
ORION CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2018 (PBK) 256PP £6.99 ISBN 9781510105010

When Ahmet joins their class, Alexa and best friends Josie, Tom and Michael set out to befriend him and try to understand why his life seems different from theirs. When they learn he is a refugee and his parents were not allowed to come to the UK with him, they decide to help their new friend find his parents with the Greatest Idea in the World! This is a glorious book celebrating diversity and encouraging empathy. An uplifting story of friendship and helping others. (Age 9–11)

VOICE OF FUTURE GENERATIONS MOVEMENT
VOICES OF THE FUTURE: STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD
BLOOMSBURY EDUCATION 2018 (HBK) 144PP £14.99 ISBN 9781472949431

This collection of stories written by young people from across the globe is part of an initiative that empowers children under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. They celebrate the power of imagination to overcome problems that threaten the future of our planet. From time-travellers saving endangered animals to invisible girls finding their voices by speaking out about gender equality, there is a clear message that the creativity of youth can be a powerful antidote to the cynicism of today’s world leaders. (Age 9–11)

SARAH WEBB illustrated by GRAHAM CORCORAN
DARE TO DREAM: IRISH PEOPLE WHO TOOK ON THE WORLD (AND WON!)
THE O'BRIEN PRESS 2019 (HBK) 64PP €16.99 ISBN 9781788491273

It's not just the obvious people, like James Joyce, that are covered in this engaging compendium – we have learnt about amazing individuals we've never heard of before. Like Albert DJ Cashier, who was a girl called Jennie who lived her life as a male soldier and fought in the American Civil War! The vivid portraits by Graham Corcoran illustrate each character ‘in action’, while Sarah Webb’s accessible prose delivers key and fun facts. A great addition to home and school bookshelves. (Non-fiction, Age 9–11)
KWAME ALEXANDER illustrated by KADIR NELSON
THE UNDEFEATED

This long poem and dramatic full-page illustrations celebrate the history of the struggles and survival of African Americans. These are ‘dreamers and doers’ who overcame prejudice and oppression to achieve great things in politics, literature, music and sport. Supported by a helpful glossary, we meet Martin Luther King Jr, Billie Holliday, Jesse Owens and many others. This book has broad appeal. The advanced vocabulary is suitable for children 11+ but younger readers will enjoy hearing and reading along with the poem, images and stories. (Non-fiction, Age 9–11, 12–14)

LULA BRIDGEPORT illustrated by FEDERICA FRENNA, ISABEL MUÑOZ and JULIANNA SWANEY
YOUNG HEROES: INSPIRATIONAL CHILDREN FROM AROUND THE WORLD
STRIPES PUBLISHING 2018 (HBK) 96PP £12.99 ISBN 9781847159557

From first page to last, this collection of inspirational young páistí is packed with masterful illustrations that encourage reading and enhance the reading experience. A range of interest areas are present, such as STEM, film, music, the environment, sport, business, literature and the arts, politics and activism. The book closes with ‘ways to be amazing every day’, encouraging the reader to bring the text into their life. This encyclopaedia of awesomeness is a necessity for all young people keen to make a mark on the world. (Non-fiction, Age 9–11, 12–14)

JAMIA WILSON illustrated by ANDREA PIPPINS
STEP INTO YOUR POWER: 23 LESSONS TO LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE
WIDE EYED EDITIONS 2019 (HBK) 64PP £14.99 ISBN 9781786035851

In a world that so often wants girls to be meek and quiet, this book advises facing your fears, pursuing your goals, standing up for yourself and against injustice, and not listening to the many voices insisting that you’re ‘not good enough’. Wilson draws on personal experience and quotes from women she admires to support a self-help guide that is encouraging without being too cutesy, reminding readers that we are all ‘perfectly imperfect’. Pippins’s bright illustrations are the icing on this empowering cake. (Non-fiction, Age 9–11, 12–14)

GRETA THUNDERG
NO ONE IS TOO SMALL TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE 2019 (PBK) 80PP £2.99 ISBN 9780141991740

‘We are now standing at a crossroads in history. We are failing but we have not yet failed. We can still fix this. It’s up to us.’ As a young activist with a massive platform, Greta has a simple message and no time for excuses or political posturing. This collection presents her most powerful and provocative speeches, delivered to world leaders on behalf of the young. A rallying cry, a warning and an insistence that we can do better. A book of our times. (Non-fiction, Age 9–11, 12–14, YA)
KAREN NG and KIRSTEN LIEPMANN illustrated by MONA KARAIVANOVĂ
LITTLE BOOK FOR BIG CHANGES: ACTIVITIES AND TIPS TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE
STUDIO PRESS 2018 (PBK) 64PP £8.99 ISBN 9781787414808

Part information book and part workbook, this is an inspirational guide for children, explaining how small changes can have a big impact on our world. Through three overarching sections (people, community and planet), the authors address specific issues such as poverty, climate change and social inclusion. A dynamic and thought-provoking read, this is an excellent tool for teaching children the importance of the individual and the notion of social obligation. (Non-fiction, Age 10–12)

RÉ Ó LAIGHLÉIS
TRUMPTAÍ DUMPTAÍ AGUS AN FALLA MÓR
MÓINÍN 2017 (BOG) LCH140 €10.00 ISBN 978095736919

Scéal grinn is ea é, scéal áiféiseach ar go leor bealaí, a chaitheann súil dhána spraúil ar imeachtaí comhaimeaireartha ár linne. An seilide Vertigo Angustior a chuireann tús le cúrsaí craiceáilte an leabhair agus go deimhin níl fear ar bith ar domhan níos fearr ná Uachtarán SAM Donald Trump chun cur leis an áiféis. Agus an Teach Bán bainte amach aige, leantar iarrachtaí an Trumpaigh an falla mór míchlúiteach, ar minic é ag tagairt dó le linn a fhéachtaí réamhthoghcháin, a thógáil idir na Stáit Aontaithe agus Meicsiceo. (Aois 10–12)

LAURA WOOD illustrated by MIRELLE ORTEGA
VOTE FOR EFFIE

Effie Kostas is facing major challenges: she has just moved to a new town and a school where she knows nobody. She’s a strong, optimistic character, but quickly becomes beaten down by feeling invisible, eating lunch alone and having a handsome, entitled boy steal the last piece of chocolate cake in the canteen. Fast-forward a few weeks and she’s running for school council president against said boy, supported by a motley campaign team of like-minded new schoolfriends. With strong first-person narration, wit is sharp and characters well-drawn. (Age 10–12)

CHIDERA EGGERUE illustrated by MANJIT THAPP
SCRIBBLE YOURSELF FEMINIST

How do you know if you are a feminist? Award-winning blogger and body positivist Eggerue speaks directly to the reader using empowering language to challenge stereotypes. Crammed with recognisable contemporary feminist role models, as well as figures from history, this activity book asks questions and offers space for readers to develop their own feminist identity. Thapp’s line illustrations are both realistic and simplified, peppered with fun fonts and doodles. A coming of age book that educates and emboldens young feminists about their bodies and rights. (Non-fiction, Age 10–12, 12–14)
ALEX FRITH, ROSIE HORE and LOUIE STOWELL
illustrated by KELLAN STOVER
POLITICS FOR BEGINNERS

With simple and clear explanations of the big issues and key debates in politics and systems of government, this colourful and engaging book helps young readers to identify the skills they need to participate actively in local community and wider society, while encouraging them to think critically and ask more questions. Guaranteed to provide opportunity for conversation and discussion at home or in the classroom, this is a fantastic introduction to an essential subject, one for everyone over the age of ten.
(Non-fiction, Age 10–12, 12–14)

ADAM and LISA MURPHY
CORPSE TALK: GROUNDBREAKING REBELS

In this entertaining history comic, notable figures from the past rise from the grave to be interviewed by a cheery presenter. This is a funny and informative look at the lives of various historical figures, with a particular focus on those who challenged authority, from artists to warrior queens, revolutionaries to Civil Rights leaders. The format of the deceased icon speaking to a cheery TV interviewer prevents the book from becoming too morbid and the scripts strike a good balance between respectful and poking fun.
(Non-fiction, 10–12, 12–14)

SALLY MORGAN illustrated by JAMES REY SANCHEZ
DREAM BIG: HEROES WHO DARED TO BE BOLD
SCHOLASTIC 2019 (PBK) 208PP £8.99 ISBN 9781407189031

Activist, artist, athlete, ecologist, entrepreneur, journalist, politician, scientist, writer ... how would you like to make a difference in this world? You’ll get plenty of ideas from this book, as it contains a hundred portraits and short biographies of people who dared to act. From a variety of countries and backgrounds, some still only in their teens, each one is an inspiration. With a suggestion of one thing you can do accompanying each profile, this lovely book might help you start transforming your dreams into reality.
(Non-fiction, Age 11–14)

MALALA YOUSAFZAI with PATRICIA McCORMICK
I AM MALALA: HOW ONE GIRL STOOD UP FOR EDUCATION AND CHANGED THE WORLD
ORION CHILDREN’S BOOKS 2015 (PBK) 272PP £7.99 ISBN 97817806222163

On a ‘most ordinary of days’ a man boarded a school bus and asked, ‘Who is Malala?’ He shot the fifteen-year-old three times, almost killing her: her campaign for girls’ education had already gone global, and the Taliban wanted her dead. This personal account of an otherwise ordinary life lived by an extraordinary girl may inspire readers to raise their own voices against injustice. A glossary, timeline of important events and colour photographs provide some historical and cultural context. (Non-fiction, Age 11–14)
M.T. ANDERSON illustrated by EUGENE YELCHIN

THE ASSASSINATION OF BRANGWAIN SPURGE

CANDLEWICK PRESS 2018 (HBK) 544PP £16.99 ISBN 9780763698225

In a bid to restore good relations, Brangwain Spurge is sent on a peace mission to the kingdom of the goblins. Officially bearing a priceless gift, the elf historian has been tasked to spy on the goblins. What could possibly go wrong? This glittering satire on international diplomacy going belly-up is recounted alternately in wild illustrations and witty prose, which do not always tell quite the same story. It will delight teen (and adult) fans of fantasy, graphic novels, current affairs and quiet, sharp hilarity. (Age 12–14)

SIOBHÁN PARKINSON illustrated by BREN LUKE

ROCKING THE SYSTEM: FEARLESS AND AMAZING IRISH WOMEN WHO MADE HISTORY

LITTLE ISLAND BOOKS 2019 (PBK) 208PP €8.99 ISBN 9781912417438

Marking the centenary of women’s suffrage in Ireland, this book celebrates twenty determined Irish women, historical and contemporary, who made a difference in Irish society and refused to be accepted as less capable or less important than their male counterparts. The illustrated essays tell the remarkable stories of not only political activists like Hannah Sheehy Skeffington, but also poets, designers, athletes and even the formidable prehistoric Queen Medbh. A must read for all, especially young girls who aspire to be ‘their own woman’. (Non-fiction, Age 12–14)

AOIFE WALSH

LOST FOR WORDS


The local library is closing down and Dallas (protagonist, not place) is not taking it well. Dealing with the combined stress of a dead mother, the possibility of moving continents and two friends with their own problems, Dallas has a lot on her plate aside from trying to stop the library’s closure. With these issues complicating the plot in interesting ways, this is more than the usual ‘Save the –!’ story. Funny and wistful, with believable kids, readers will certainly not be lost for praise. (Age 12–14)

SHEENA WILKINSON

STAR BY STAR

LITTLE ISLAND BOOKS 2017 (PBK) 180PP €9.00 ISBN 9781910411537

Set in 1918 against the backdrop of the flu epidemic, the Great War and the Irish struggle for independence, Star by Star is a novel that is full of hope. Themes of loss, grief, trauma and change are explored through Stella, a vulnerable, impulsive, feisty and thoroughly likeable heroine who is as concerned with fashion and making friends as she is with injustice and political causes. Wilkinson’s writing gives the novel a contemporary feel while being grounded in historical fact. (Age 12–14)
DR CHRIS YUILL and DR CHRISTOPHER THORPE
HEADS UP SOCIOLOGY

Covering topics such as identity, class, race, wealth, inequality, crime, health, culture, mass media and many more, this book explains how sociology investigates these issues and raises fascinating questions about how individuals are influenced by the society they belong to. There are profiles of influential sociologists and examples of research projects and real-life scenarios. The design is superb, with striking illustrations and eye-catching quotes and statistics to break up the text. Encouraging critical thinking, this is an ideal book for curious minds. (Non-fiction, Age 12–14, YA)

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK
HERE I STAND

This eclectic collection of stories and poetry, penned by an impressive group of contemporary writers and illustrated by Chris Riddell, sets out to explore the rights and freedoms that still elude us in today’s world. Tackling themes including poverty, racism, gender inequality and religious extremism, none of these contributors shies away from the harsh realities many in our society face. Particularly noteworthy are compelling poems by Amy Leon and Jackie Kay and powerful stories from Chibundu Onuzo, John Boyne, Sita Brahmachari, Jack Gantos, Frances Hardinge and Bali Rai. (YA)

MUHAMMAD KHAN
I AM THUNDER
MACMILLAN CHILDREN’S BOOKS 2018 (PBK) 320PP £7.99 ISBN 9781509874057

Muzna Saleem dreams of being a writer, yet her controlling parents want her to be a doctor and have strict rules about her behaviour. When her friend Salma is shamed, she realises the cost of mistakes in her community. At her new school, Muzna falls for the charismatic Arif, who encourages her to explore her religion and deepen her faith. But his brother’s views worry her, and Muzna finds herself placed in an impossible position. A powerful debut about racism and the power of speaking out. (YA)

TRACEY MATHIAS
NIGHT OF THE PARTY
SCHOLASTIC 2018 (PBK) 448PP £7.99 ISBN 9781407188003

The tragic death of a girl at a party throws two young people together amidst the turmoil of post-Brexit Britain. ‘The Party’ governs Britain now and has removed the rights of anyone not ‘British Born’. Haunted by the death of his sister Sophie, Ash tries to get on with life – until he meets Zara. Zara knows something about what happened at the party, but she is an ‘illegal’. Can she risk telling her secrets? A mystery, love story and political thriller with pace and heart. (YA)
RANDY RIBAY
PATRON SAINTS OF NOTHING

A touching story of one boy’s determined quest for truth and justice after the death of his cousin, supposedly as part of the brutal war on drugs in his home country. Jay leaves the comfort of the American suburbs on an eye-opening journey to the Philippines, from the home of his uncle, a wealthy policeman, to the slums of Manila. People are complex and nuanced, and Ribay is outstanding in the wisdom and compassion of his portrayal of families, the privileged and the deprived. (YA)

ANGIE THOMAS
THE HATE U GIVE
WALKER BOOKS 2017 (PBK) 448PP £7.99 ISBN 9781406372151

Meet sixteen-year-old Starr, a girl on the cusp of change. She lives in a poor neighbourhood but attends a posh school. How do these two worlds co-exist? Can they co-exist? When Starr is the only witness to a fatal shooting by a police officer, is silence a better option, or should she speak out? Who can she confide in and how will she be true to a friend? A truly atmospheric read that deals with the choices society forces on some and the consequences of those actions. (YA)

RENEE WATSON and ELLEN HAGAN
WATCH US RISE
BLOOMSBURY YA 2019 (PBK) 368PP £7.99 ISBN 9781526600868

Chelsea and Jasmine are ‘artivists’. They want to promote social justice through their writing but feel stifled, even at their hyper-liberal New York high school. To make their voices heard, they’ll have to break some rules. Jasmine is an engaging narrator, particularly when describing the slow fallout from a tragic family illness, while Chelsea’s poems perfectly capture the emotion and frustration of a developing teenage writer. Readers who avidly follow American cultural politics will find much here to provoke and inspire. (YA)

VARIOUS ILLUSTRATORS
MIGRATIONS: OPEN HEARTS, OPEN BORDERS

This collection of illustrated postcards from artists who wished to express their support for migrants and refugees comes with the endorsement and support of iBbY (The International Board on Books for Young People), Amnesty International and The International Centre for the Picture Book in Society. Although there is no plot or story included here, this heartwarming collection (prefaced by Shaun Tan) will certainly spark conversations about the need for assistance, acceptance and inclusion not just for migrants, but for all. (All ages)
Children’s Books Ireland produced this resource with the expert assistance of Juliette Saumande and Claire M. Dunne. We also wish to acknowledge the work of our Inis magazine and Recommended Reads Guide reviewers.

This list was published in 2020.

Follow us on social media!

Facebook: childrensbooksireland
Twitter: @KidsBooksIrel
Instagram: @kidsbooksirel
CBI-Children’s Books Ireland