Cheryl Minnema Wins 2020 Charlotte Zolotow Award for Johnny’s Pheasant

Madison, WI – *Johnny’s Pheasant*, written by Cheryl Minnema and illustrated by Julie Flett, is the winner of the twenty-third annual Charlotte Zolotow Award for outstanding writing in a picture book. The award is given by the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC), a library of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. *Johnny’s Pheasant* was edited by Erik Anderson, and published in the United States in 2019 by the University of Minnesota Press.

This gorgeous, graceful story about a Native family, written by an Ojibwe author and illustrated by a Cree-Métis artist, centers on small moments of surprise. When Johnny urges his grandma to pull over for a “small feathery hump” near the ditch, they discover it’s a pheasant. Johnny’s certain it’s sleeping. Grandma guesses it was hit by a car, but she can use the feathers in her craftwork. With a “Hoot! Hoot!” from both boy and bird, this perfectly paced narrative offers humor, wonder, warmth, and a child-centered sensibility.

The 2020 Zolotow Award committee named five Honor Books: *Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story*, written by Kevin Noble Maillard, illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal, edited by Connie Hsu, and published by Roaring Brook Press, appeals to the senses while celebrating complex cultural concepts centering on a food of many Native American tribal nations; *A Map into the World*, written by Kao Kalia Yang, illustrated by Seo Kim, edited by Carol Hinz, and published by Carolrhoda Books, quietly tracks a year in the life of a Hmong American girl observing changes small and large at home and in her neighborhood; *Pokko and the Drum*, written and illustrated by Matthew Forsythe, edited by Paula Wiseman, and published by Paula Wiseman Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, uses...
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sublime pacing to capture the mounting exuberance and rising volume triggered when frog parents gift their daughter with a drum; *Saturday*, written and illustrated by Oge Mora, edited by Andrea Spooner, and published by Little, Brown and Company, celebrates the resilience of a mother and daughter who support each other through disappointments and confirm that time spent together ultimately defines the day’s success; and, *Truman*, written by Jean Reidy, illustrated by Lucy Ruth Cummins, edited by Alexa Pastor, and published by Atheneum Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing Division, which chronicles the herculean efforts of a small tortoise determined to be reunited with his beloved human.

The 2020 Zolotow Award committee also cited seven titles as Highly Commended: *Beware of the Crocodile* written by Martin Jenkins, illustrated by Satoshi Kitamura (U.S. edition: Candlewick Press); *Daniel’s Good Day* written and illustrated by Micha Archer (Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin Random House); *Goodbye, Friend! Hello, Friend!* written and illustrated by Cori Doerrfeld (Dial Books / Penguin Random House); *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* written by Isabel Quintero, illustrated by Zeke Peña (Kokila / Penguin Random House); *One Fox: A Counting Book Thriller* written and illustrated by Kate Read (Peachtree); *Small in the City* written and illustrated by Sydney Smith (Neal Porter Books / Holiday House); and *The Thing about Bees: A Love Letter* written and illustrated by Shabazz Larkin (Readers to Eaters).

Established in 1998, the Charlotte Zolotow Award honors the work of Charlotte Zolotow, a distinguished children's book editor for 38 years with Harper Junior Books, and author of more than 70 picture books, including such classic works as *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present*

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The award is given annually for outstanding writing in a picture book for children in the birth-through-seven age range published in the United States in the preceding year. The 2020 award will be given at an award ceremony in Madison at a date to be determined.

Members of the 2020 Zolotow Award committee were: Merri Lindgren, chair (Librarian, Cooperative Children’s Book Center, Madison, Wisconsin); Shannon Furman (School Librarian, Lake View Elementary School, Madison, Wisconsin); Kelsey Johnson-Kaiser (Youth Services Manager, St. Paul Public Library, St. Paul, Minnesota); Bridget Nolan (Kindergarten Teacher, Paul J. Olson Elementary School, Verona, Wisconsin); and Jeni Schomber (Head of Library Services, Beloit Public Library, Beloit, Wisconsin).

The Cooperative Children's Book Center is a noncirculating library for adults with a professional, career or academic interest in children's and young adult literature. The Friends of the CCBC, Inc., cosponsors of the award event, is a nonprofit organization offering lectures, book sales and other benefits for members, in addition to supporting the work of the Cooperative Children’s Book Center.

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