

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Carole Boston Weatherford Wins 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award

Madison, WI -- *Freedom in Congo Square*, written by Carole Boston Weatherford and illustrated by R. Gregory Christie, is the winner of the twentieth 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, and will be presented in Madison this spring.

Carole Boston Weatherford's potent picture book narrative begins "Mondays, there were hogs to slop, / mules to train, and logs to chop. / Slavery was no ways fair. / Six more days to Congo Square." Congo Square, the Foreword explains, was a legal gathering spot for enslaved and free Blacks in New Orleans. The first 14 couplets count down the days to Congo Square, documenting the work of enslaved men and women as they labored in fields and in houses, in despair and in defiance, Monday through Saturday. The remaining 11 couplets mark the transition to Sunday, and the gathering in Congo Square, spinning out details of music and dancing, chanting and singing, lifting spirits and hearts. The deceptively spare text resounds with power and honesty, and is set against expressive paintings in which stylized, elongated figures carry out the heavy work of Monday through Saturday, before breaking free to move with fluid joy and abandon on Sunday.

Freedom in Congo Square was edited by Sonali Fry and published in the United States in 2016 by little bee books.

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The 2017 Zolotow Award committee named three Honor Books: *Alan's Big, Scary Teeth*, written and illustrated by Jarvis, edited by Maria Tunney, and published by Candlewick Press; *Giant Squid*, written by Candace Fleming, illustrated by Eric Rohmann, edited by Neal Porter, and published by Neal Porter Books / Roaring Brook Press, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group; and *Thunder Boy Jr.*, written by Sherman Alexie, illustrated by Yuyi Morales, edited by Alvina Ling, and published by Little, Brown and Company.

The 2017 Zolotow Award committee also cited ten titles as Highly Commended: *A Bike Like Sergio's*, written by Maribeth Boelts, illustrated by Noah Z. Jones (Candlewick Press); *Blocks*, written and illustrated by Irene Dickson (Nosy Crow / Candlewick Press); *The Cow Who Climbed a Tree*, written and illustrated by Gemma Merino (Albert Whitman); *Daniel Finds a Poem*, written and illustrated by Micha Archer (Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin Random House); *Hannah and Sugar*, written and illustrated by Kate Berube (Abrams); *Maybe Something Beautiful: How Art Transformed a Neighborhood*, written by F. Isabel Campoy and Theresa Howell, illustrated by Rafael López (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt); *My New Mom and Me*, written and illustrated by Renata Galindo (Schwartz & Wade Books / Random House); *The Princess and the Warrior*, written and illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh (Abrams); *School's First Day of School*, written by Adam Rex, illustrated by Christian Robinson (A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press / Macmillan); and *The Sound of Silence*, written by Katrina Goldsaito, illustrated by Julia Kuo (Little, Brown).

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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* (Harper, 1962) and *William's Doll* (Harper, 1972). Ms. Zolotow attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison on a writing scholarship from 1933 to 1936, where she studied with Professor Helen C. White. Ms. Zolotow died in November, 2013, at the age of 98.

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. Members of the 2017 Zolotow Award committee were: Merri Lindgren, chair (Librarian, Cooperative Children's Book Center, Madison, Wisconsin); Ellen Bunn (Librarian, EAGLE School, Madison, Wisconsin); Linda DeCramer (Children's Librarian, Ripon Public Library, Ripon, Wisconsin); Joan Ershler (Director, Waisman Early Childhood Program, Madison, Wisconsin); and Ben Kaker (Teacher, Crestwood Elementary School, Madison, 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., sponsors 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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