# Best Bets for Summer Reading!

## Picture Books

I Can, Too! by Karen Autio, Illustrated by Laura Watson, Scholastic.(2023 List)

Piper and Kayla love to move! They can both do all sorts of things. From crawling, rolling, standing, and swimming, these two and their friends explore their world. We see and learn about a variety of useful tools for folks who have different ways of moving through the world. At the end, the section about Amazing Ways to Move explains a variety of adaptive equipment for people who are not able to use their legs, or cannot walk far. With these inclusive practices, the reader sees that we can all play together.

Imagination Vacation by Jami Gigot, Albert Whitman. (2019 List)

Sam’s family is busy – there’s work, chores around the house, and a little sister who is always up to something. Wishing for a break and time together, Sam dreams of a vacation. Rather than wait for “someday” like Dad promises, Sam gets to work. With a little research, a lot of crafting, and all her imagination, she leads the family on a world-wide adventure without ever leaving town. Offers a fantastic opportunity to use our imaginations to their fullest, and also highlights the importance of carving out family time.

On the Trapline by David A. Robertson, Illustrated by Julie Flett, Tundra Books. (2021 List)

A boy and his Moshom, (Swampy Cree for Grandpa), take a trip to the Northern wilderness to visit the trapline where many years ago his grandpa and family lived off the land, before he and his siblings were forced to leave to attend school. While on the trapline stories and language is shared between the boy and his Moshom as they reconnect to the land and their culture. Told in long prose and muted colour palette that places an emphasis on the two figures contrasted with the land. The depiction of the sky and water is deserving of special attention.

Catch the Sky: Playful Poems on the Air we Share by Robert Heidbreder, Illustrated by Emily Dove, Greystone Kids. (2020 List)

A lovely collection of short poems that can be read by yourself or out loud. Each poem flows from one element of nature to another. Accompanied by beautiful watercolour and ink illustrations this is a book to share and appreciate the world around us.

## Junior Fiction

Gnome is Where the Heart is by Casey Lyall, HarperCollins (2023 list)

Eleven-year-old Lemon Peabody is certain that aliens visited her grandfather thirty years ago, but she is running out of time to prove it before Grandpa Walt's memory fades due to Alzheimer’s disease. After spotting a spaceship during a storm, Lemon comes face-to-face with garden gnome-like aliens, and nothing goes the way she expected. By turns heartwarming and heartbreaking, this sensitive novel is about family, friendship, and always believing in yourself.

Elvis, Me, and the Lemonade Stand Summer by Leslie Gentile, Cormorant. (2021 List)

It’s the summer of 1978, and lo and behold, who pulls up to the Eagle Shores Trailer park but Elvis Presley. Declared dead just a year ago, fellow resident Truly Bateman is convinced that this is the King. Over the course of the summer Truly tries to convince people that Elvis lives in her trailer park, all the while setting up a lemonade stand each day to make enough money to find her biological father. There isn’t much support from her alcoholic mother, but as Truly realizes over the course of these few months, family is more than just blood relatives.

Shirley and Jamila Save Their Summer by Gillian Gorez, Penguin Random House. (2020 list)

Jamila Waheed is not going to have a good summer, she just moved to a new neighbourhood, her mom wants her to go to science camp, and she’s not allowed to go to the basketball court down the street on her own. A chance meeting with new neighbour Shirley Bones, kid detective changes all of that. Jamila may be able to save her summer and solve some crimes in the process, now if only she could solve the mystery of what it means to be a good friend. Gorez puts an unfamiliar twist on the familiar kid detective genre with beautiful illustrations, great characters and excellent comedy. The mystery in this graphic novel will have both middle graders and adults guessing at the ending.

Forever Birchwood by Danielle Daniel, HarperCollins (2022 list)

In Danielle Daniel’s first work of Juvenile Fiction, Wolf learns she is a tree talker and destined to protect the trees and nature around her. After learning that their treehouse hideaway, Birchwood, is under threat of a housing development, she and her three best friends set out to save the forest. But as each friend works to find themselves, the best friends also face the challenges of growing up. Rich with the changes that happen during middle-grade years and the importance of Indigenous Worldviews, this debut is filled with hope.

## Young Adult

Catfish Rolling by Clara Kumagai, Penguin Random House (2023 list)

There's a catfish under Japan, and when it rolls, the land rises and falls. At least, that's what Sora was told after she lost her mother to an earthquake so powerful that it cracked time itself. Sora and her father are some of the few who still live near the most powerful of these "zones" — the places where time has been irrevocably sped up or slowed down. When high school ends, and her best friend leaves for university, Sora finds herself stuck and increasingly alone while working through her, and her father’s, grief. She begins secretly conducting her own research, tracking down a time expert in Tokyo. She also feels increasingly conflicted in her quasi-romantic feelings for her best friend — and for the time expert's assistant, a striking and confident girl named Maya with whom Sora forms an instant bond. But when Sora's father disappears, she has no choice but to return home and venture deep into the abandoned time zones to find him. A stunning coming of age story intertwining Japanese myth and magic realism.

The Summer of Bitter and Sweet by Jen Ferguson, HarperCollins. (2022 list)

Lou, a Métis teen, hopes that she will have an uneventful summer running the Michif Creamery with her best friend Florence and her (newly) ex-boyfriend while her mom is away selling beadwork at Powwows. But that doesn’t prove to be the case, as a long lost friend named King comes back to town and her abusive father is released from prison after serving time for the violent sexual assault of Lou’s mother when she was just a teen. Lou finds herself at a junction, when her father harrasses her and the ice cream business. With the help of King, Lou begins to process the legacy of trauma and her own sexuality.

Camp Spirit by Axelle Lenoir, Penguin Random House. (2020 list)

It’s the summer of 1994 and Elodie has been forced by her mother to take a job as a camp counsellor deep in the woods of Quebec. The only problem being she doesn’t know the first thing about nature, or sports, or kids. As Elodie goes through the summer she discovers new things, like she may actually be good with kids, and that she may like her fellow counsellor Catherine as more than a friend, oh, and that the camp is most definitely haunted by a supernatural beast that is invading her dreams. Fast paced, irreverent, hilarious, and with a very cute budding queer romance. Perfect for anyone who loves comedy, romance and a dash of supernatural spooks.

The Signs and Wonder of Tuna Rashad by Natasha Deen, Running Press Kids. (2022 List)

Tuna is determined to date her crush before she leaves for College. But this is not an easy feat with an overbearing, grief-stricken older brother, constant signs from her Caribbean ancestors, and a looming deadline. This Forest of Reading White Pine reading list YA story is more than a romantic comedy, it is rich with Caribbean traditions, the grief process, and family dynamics.