



**Exploring Homelessness Through Young Adult Literature:**

**An Annotated Bibliography**

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**Anonymous.** *Almost Lost: The True Story of an Anonymous Teenager's Life on the Streets.* HarperTeen, 1996. ISBN# 9780380783410.

This is the real-life story of Sam, the torment of his own self-loathing, how he survived on the street, and came home to overcome his negative and dark feelings. Gr. 9-12.

**Allison, Anthony.** *Hear These Voices.* Dutton, 1999. ISBN# 9780525453536.

This non-fiction book presents case studies of teenagers living with homelessness, prostitution, alcoholism, and neighborhood violence. It also includes interviews with staff members from organizations committed to helping teenagers in crisis. Gr. 9-12.

**Banks, Russell.** *Rule of the Bone.* Vintage, 1996. ISBN# 9780394281650.

*Rule of the Bone* is the story of a troubled fourteen-year-old boy who, upon leaving an abusive home, lives on the edge of society, and struggles to find himself. Gr. 9-12.

**Bayless, Maureen.** *No Fixed Address.* Scholastic Canada, 1997. ISBN# 9780590123785.

Thirteen-year-old Sabie's Mom has just died, leaving her on the street. Sabie is determined to forge a family, any way she can. Gr. 6-8.

**\*Bedard, Michael.** *Stained Glass.* Tundra Books, 2002. ISBN: 0887766021.

While skipping his piano lesson one day, Charles witnesses a stained glass window break in the local church. The window appears to have shattered on top of a homeless girl sleeping in the pew. She has a cut on her forehead and no recollection of who she is or where she comes from. Feeling concerned for her injury, Charles decides to accompany her around the city in the hopes that she will see something that jogs her memory. Over the course of the day he is forced to confront his own memories and in doing so comes to terms with his father's death. A subplot involves Mr. Berkeley reflecting on his past. After his wife's death he became a homeless drifter. When he regained his faith and sense of purpose he found a literal home in the church building. Gr. 8-10.

**Blank, Jessica.** *Almost Home.* Hyperion Press, 2007. ISBN# 9781423106425.

Why would anyone choose to live on the streets? The characters of *Almost Home* examine the answers to this question. There is Eeyore, twelve years old when she runs away from her privileged home, who harbors a secret she's too ashamed to tell anyone. Rusty is a sensitive gay teen who winds up alone when his older boyfriend ditches him in Hollywood. Squid has gone through too many foster homes to count. Scabius is a delusional punk from Utah who takes the "me against the world" motto to dangerous extremes. Critter is a heroin dealer with movie star looks and a vulnerable heart. Laura should be home studying, but she can't face another one of

her mom's boyfriends. And then there's Tracy, the damaged thread that ties them all together, irrevocably changing each person's life she touches. This unlikely band of characters forms their own dysfunctional family, complete with love and belonging, abuse and betrayal. Each will make their way home, wherever that may be. Gr. 9-12.

**\*Booth, Coe. *Tyrell*.** PUSH, Scholastic Inc., 2007.

Tyrell is a fifteen-year-old African American boy living in a shelter with his mother and little brother, Troy, in Brooklyn. Tyrell's father is in jail, and his mother refuses to get a job, leaving Tyrell to assume the male role in the family. Tyrell takes care of Troy and devises a plan to make money so his family can afford an apartment. Meanwhile, Tyrell's mother leaves Troy alone once again, but this time the manager of the shelter calls ACS. Deciding that Troy is better off in foster care, Tyrell leaves his mother and goes back to the projects to live with a friend. Gr. 11-12.

**Bowsher, Melodie. *My Lost and Found Life*.** Bloomsbury USA, 2007 ISBN# 9781599901558.

When her mother is accused of embezzling a million dollars and vanishes, spoiled, selfish Ashley must fend for herself by finding a job and a place to live. Gr. 6-8.

**Brooks, Martha. *Being with Henry*.** Dorling Kindersley, 2000. ISBN# 9780789425881.

Kicked out of his house and now homeless, Lake Wyatt meets eighty-three-year-old Henry Olsen, a lonely widower with family troubles of his own. Lake's stay with Henry leads him to a deeper understanding of the mysteries and difficulties of love. Gr. 10-12.

**Burgess, Melvin. *Baby and Fly Pie: Could a Kidnapped Baby Be The Key to a Better Life for Three Homeless Kids?*** Simon and Schuster, 1996. ISBN-13: 9780689804892

In a London of the future, three homeless teens stumble upon a kidnapped baby worth 17 million pounds. They could use her to make all their dreams come true, if only they handle things in the right way. But the three can't agree on what the "right" approach is. The teens' struggle with each other and with the harsh society in which they live in is a compelling, and often chilling, tale.

**\*Burgess, Melvin. *Smack*.** Henry Holt and Company, LLC., 1996.

Fourteen-year-old Tar decides he can no longer suffer the physical abuse of his father and runs away with his girlfriend, Gemma. The two find company in other homeless squatters who introduce them to drugs; Tar and Gemma quickly become junkies. As their lives spiral out of control, Gemma becomes pregnant and it is only then—after three years of experiencing the streets, drugs, prostitution, and robbery—does she move back home with her new baby girl, and without Tar. Gr. 9-11.

**Carey, Janet Lee. *The Double Life of Zoe Flynn*.** New York: Aladdin Books, 2007. ISBN: 1416967540.

When Zoe's family has to live in their van for months after moving from California to Oregon so her father can find work, Zoe tries to keep her sixth-grade classmates from discovering that she is homeless. Gr. 6-8.

**Clark, Margaret.** *Back on Track: Diary of a Street Kid*. Random House Australia, 1995. ISBN# 9780091831622.

Fifteen-year-old Simone is lured away from home by her new boyfriend with promises of a better life in a big city. On the run from a dangerous environment and her drug-addicted sister, she arrives in Palmino with stars in her eyes and hope in her heart.

**Clark, Margaret.** *Care Factor Zero*. Sagebrush Education Resources, 2000. ISBN # 9780613277594.

An explosive story of a teen runaway and her life on the streets. Larceny is a wild child. She's been hassled by cops and shuffled between foster homes. She's afraid of walls and bars—and of the voices that bring with them the wild, consuming, killing rage that drove her to the streets in the first place. But most of all, she's afraid of being betrayed by the only person she's ever been able to trust: herself.

**Creel, Ann.** *A Ceiling of Stars*. Middleton: American Girl, 1999, ISBN # 978-1562477530.

In a series of letters and journal entries, twelve-year-old Vivien describes being abandoned by her mother and struggling to survive on the streets of a big city while searching for her family.

\***Cooley, Beth.** *Shelter*. Delacorte Press: Random House Inc., 2006.

After her father's unexpected death, Lucy Durbin, along with her mother and younger brother, is forced to live in a homeless shelter. Initially Lucy feels as if she is living a nightmare, but by the time her mother earns enough money to move her family out of the shelter, Lucy has formed close relationships with the other residents and has accepted the reasons for her own homelessness. Gr. 9-12.

**Criswell, Sara Dixon.** *Homelessness*. San Diego: Lucent Books, 1998.

This book discusses the causes of homelessness, life on the streets, homeless children, the shelter system, and help for the homeless.

\***Cushman, Karen.** *The Midwife's Apprentice*. HarperCollins Publishers, 1995.

One night in medieval England, a girl with no home, no parents, and no name struggles to keep warm in a roadside dung heap. The town's midwife, Jane, takes the newly named "Dung Beetle" into her home as an ill-used and poorly-fed apprentice. For the first time "Beetle" has the semblance of a home, makes friends, and decides her own identity as "Alyce." But, she leaves all this behind and runs away to a nearby Inn after failing an assignment—she was unable to help a woman give birth without the midwife. After spending time at the Inn, and learning how to

read and write, Alyce realizes she does have a name and a place in the world and returns to be the midwife's apprentice. Gr. 6-8.

**De La Pena, Matt. *Ball Don't Lie*.** Random House Children's Books, 2005. ISBN# 9780385732321.

Sticky is a beat-around-the-head foster kid with nowhere to call home but the street, and an outer shell so tough that no one will take him in. He started out life so far behind the pack that the finish line seems nearly unreachable. He's a white boy living and playing in a world where he doesn't seem to belong. But Sticky can ball. And basketball might just be his ticket out . . . if he can only realize that he doesn't have to be the person everyone else expects him to be. Gr. 9-12

**Deuker, Carl. *Runner*.** HMCo Children's Books, 2005. ISBN# 9780618542987.

Chance Taylor and his father live on a boat. But the weather-beaten sailboat Chance Taylor and his father call home is thirty years old and hasn't sailed in years. One step from both homelessness and hunger, Chance worries about things other kids his age never give a thought: Where will the money come for the electricity bill, grocery bill, and moorage fees? So when a new job falls his way, he jumps at the opportunity. He knows how much he will earn; what he doesn't know is how much he will pay. Gr. 6-8.

**Easton, Kelly. *Walking on Air*.** New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2004, ISBN# 978-0689848759.

In 1931, a young girl travels around the country performing on a tightrope during revival meetings held by her father, and seeking her own answers about God, her family, and her life of poverty and homelessness.

**Ellis, Deborah. *Looking for X*.** Groundwood Books, 2001. ISBN# 9780888993823.

Khyber is an eleven-year-old girl living in poverty with her single mother and autistic twin brothers. When she is falsely accused of vandalism, she must track her friend X, a homeless woman, to verify her alibi. Gr. 6-8.

**\*Ellis, Deborah. *Parvana's Journey*.** Groundwood Books/Douglas & McIntyre, 2002. ISBN: 0888995148.

Parvana and her father have been living in a refugee camp since losing their home in Kabul. After her father dies of pneumonia, Parvana sets off in search of her mother and siblings, who had gone to a wedding out of town when their home was lost. Parvana is joined along the way by three other displaced children, all of whom have suffered from the Taliban and constant warring in Afghanistan. They endure freezing nights, exhaustion, and starvation before finally arriving at a crowded refugee camp. Space is limited because the camp is adjacent to a mine field, but Parvana and her friends decide to remain, relieved to finally be among adults again. One day a relief plane flies over the camp and drops food parcels to the refugees. Many of the parcels fall in the mine field. Leila runs out onto the field to get one and is injured by mine

exploding. Parvana rushes out and carries her back to the safety of the camp, but Leila dies moments later. A large crowd witnesses this, and a woman among them goes to comfort Parvana and Asif. Parvana lifts the woman's burqa to find that the woman is her mother. Her siblings are also there in the camp. Parvana's mother adopts Asif and Hassan so that they can be one whole family. They still must live in the refugee camp, but having a family again gives Parvana the will to look to the future with hope. Gr. 7-9.

**Erlbaum, Janice. *Girlbomb: A Halfway Homeless Memoir*.** Random House Publishing Group, 2007. ISBN# 9780812974560.

At fifteen, sick of her unbearable and increasingly dangerous home life, Janice Erlbaum walks out of her family's Brooklyn apartment and doesn't look back. From her first frightening night at a shelter, Janice knows she is in over her head. She is beaten up, shaken down, and nearly stabbed by a pregnant girl. But it is still better than living at home. As Janice slips further into street life, she still attends high school, harbors crushes, and even plays the lead in the spring musical. She also roams the streets, clubs, bars, and parks of New York City with her two best girlfriends, on the prowl for hard drugs and boys on skateboards. Together they score coke at Danceteria, smoke angel dust in East Village squats, commiserate over their crazy mothers, and sleep with one another's boyfriends on a regular basis. This memoir chronicles the author's teen years and the challenges that came with them. Gr. 9-12

**Evans, Douglas. *So What Do You Do?*** Boyds Mills Press, 1997. ISBN# 9781886910201.

Two sixth graders discover that their beloved third-grade teacher is living on the streets. Gr. 6-8

**Fenner, Carol. *The King of Dragons*.** Random House Audio, 2000. ISBN-13: 9780553526134

Eleven-year-old Ian and his father have been homeless for the past several years. Then one night, Ian's father fails to return to their "home." Ian's precarious survival on his own, following all the precautions his father has taught him, makes absorbing reading in this contemporary story of a closely knit, remarkably independent father and son by a 1996 Newbery Honor winner.

**Fensham, Elizabeth. *Helicopter Man*.** New York: Bloomsbury: Holtzbrinck Publishers, 2001, ISBN# 978-1582349817.

Peter Sinclair cares for his father, who is mentally ill, and tries to make the most of their homeless life together.

**Flake, Sharon G. *Begging for Change*.** Hyperion Books for Children, 2007. ISBN# 9781423103844.

Teenaged Raspberry Hill tries to sort out her confused feelings of disgust, shame, and love for her homeless, drug addicted father, and worries that she may have inherited his lying and stealing ways. Gr. 6-8

**Flake, Sharon G. *Money Hungry*.** Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Books for Children, 2001. ISBN# 9780786805488.

Thirteen-year-old Raspberry Hill is always scheming about ways to make money. She's starved for the green stuff, and will do just about anything legal to get it—wash cars, sell rotten candy, skip lunch, and clean houses. She is obsessed with making money, having money, smelling money, and touching money. Raspberry is determined that she and her momma will never be homeless again. When they are approved for a Section 8 move to a nice house in Pecan Landings, Raspberry thinks things are looking up. But after their apartment in the projects is robbed, and protests by the rich folks in Pecan Landings force them out of their new house, Raspberry must do everything in her power to keep her world from crumbling. Gr. 6-8

**Fox, Paula. *Monkey Island*.** Dell, 1991. ISBN# 9780440407706.

Eleven-year-old Clay Garrity is on his own. His father lost his job and left the family. Now Clay's mother is gone from their welfare hotel. Clay is homeless and out on the streets of New York. In the park he meets two homeless men, Buddy and Calvin, who become Clay's new family during those harsh winter weeks. But the streets are filled with danger and despair. If Clay leaves the streets he may never find his parents again. But if he stays on the streets he may not survive at all. Gr. 6-8.

**Frost, Helen. *Keesha's House*.** Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR), 2007. ISBN# 9780374400125.

Keesha has found a safe place to live, and other kids gravitate to her house when they just can't make it on their own. They include Stephanie, who is pregnant, and trying to make the right decisions for herself and those she cares about; Jason, Stephanie's boyfriend, torn between his responsibility to Stephanie and the baby and the promise of a college basketball career; Dontay, who is in foster care while his parents are in prison, feeling unwanted both inside and outside the system; Carmen, who was arrested on a DUI charge, waiting in a juvenile detention center for a judge to hear her case; Harris, disowned by his father after disclosing that he's gay, living in his car, and taking care of himself; and Katie, angry at her mother's loyalty to an abusive stepfather, losing herself in long hours of work and school. Their stories are written as a sequence of dramatic monologues, chronicling their attempts to overcome their lives' challenges. Gr. 9-12.

**Going, K. L. *Fat Kid Rules the World*.** Penguin USA, 2004. ISBN# 9780142402085.

Seventeen-year-old Troy, depressed, suicidal, and weighing nearly 300 pounds, gets a new perspective on life when a homeless teenager, who is a genius on guitar, wants Troy to be the drummer in his rock band. Gr. 9-12.

**Golding, Teresa Martin. *Niner*.** Boyds Mills Pr, 2008. ISBN# 9781590785492

When twelve-year-old Macey discovers a locket on her front steps, she begins a journey to find out who she really is and why her adoptive mother has been gone for almost a year. Gr. 6-8.

**Gottfried, Ted. *Homelessness: Whose Problem is It?*** Brookfield: Millbrook Press,

1999, ISBN# 978-0761309536.

This book discusses the issue of homelessness, examining who the homeless are, how they become that way, and the differing views on how to deal with the problem.

**Grant, Cynthia D. *The White Horse*.** Tandem Library Books, 2000. ISBN# 9780613287005.

In her writing for a concerned teacher, sixteen-year-old Raina reveals her troubles with a dysfunctional family, life on the streets, drug abuse, and an unplanned pregnancy. Gr. 9-12

**Grant, Cynthia D. *Mary Wolf*.** Simon & Schuster, 1995. ISBN# 9780689800078.

Losing everything when her father is let go from his job, Mary becomes an unheeded voice of reason as her family struggles for survival in their RV. A sudden and violent act is the only way Mary is finally able to save her family. Gr. 9-12.

**Greenwald, Sheila. *My Fabulous New Life*.** New York: Browndeer Press, 1993, ISBN# 978-0152776930 .

Eleven-year-old Alison, having moved from the affluent suburbs to an apartment in New York City, tries to make new friends and come to terms with the homelessness she sees all around her.

**Griffin, Paul. *Ten Mile River*.** New York: Dial Books, 2008, ISBN# 978-0803732841.

Having escaped from juvenile detention centers and foster care, two teenage boys live on their own in an abandoned shack in a New York City park, making their way by stealing, occasionally working, and trying to keep from being arrested.

**Grossman, David. *Someone to Run With: A Novel*.** Picador, 2005. ISBN# 9780312421946.

When awkward and painfully shy sixteen-year-old Assaf is asked to find the owner of a stray yellow lab, he begins a quest that will bring him into contact with street kids and criminals, and a talented young singer, Tamar, engaged on her own mission to rescue a teenage drug addict. Gr. 9-12.

**Hahn, Mary Drowning. *December Stillness*.** HarperCollins, 1990. ISBN# 9780380707645.

Thirteen-year-old Kelly tries to befriend Mr. Weems, a disturbed, homeless Vietnam veteran who spends his days in the library, though he makes it clear he wants to be left alone. Gr. 6-8.

**\*Hallowell, Janis. *The Annunciation of Francesca Dunn*.** Harper Collins Publishers Inc, 2004.

*The Annunciation of Francesca Dunn* is a text of interwoven voices that come together to tell a story of faith, pain, and identity. Chester, a man experiencing homelessness, has a vision that



Francesca, a girl who works in the diner, is the Virgin Mary. The news about Francesca spreads quickly, and soon she has a large following of believers. Francesca questions her new position as a religious idol but ultimately believes she is the reincarnation of the Virgin Mary. However, when Francesca finds out that she may be pregnant, she and her mother visit an abortion clinic and her followers become outraged. Francesca and her mother are forced to flee and hide out in a cabin removed from town. During the time at the cabin, Francesca struggles with her identity and is only able to accept reality when she cannot heal a sick child, Jonah. After the death of Jonah, Francesca is able to come to terms with reality and find her place in the world. Gr. 10-12.

**Hamilton, Fritz. *Love, Debra: A Novel*.** Open Hand Publishing, LLC, 1990. ISBN# 9780940880290.

Fifteen-year-old Debra takes the family Cadillac and runs away from home, leaving her sexually abusive father, his mistress, and the grave of her alcoholic mother. Lonely, Debra begins a series of letters to her dead mother revealing her odyssey through the underworld of the streets. Debra then explores alcohol, drugs, and prostitution and meets Richard, the kind, middle-aged night clerk. They head for San Francisco, hoping for a new life. When the letters end, we too have lived through her experiences of addiction, abortion, welfare, and AIDS. Gr. 10-12.

**\*Hamilton, Harriet. *Ribbons of the Sun*.** Brown Barn Books, 2006.

*Ribbons of the Sun* is the story of Rosa, a twelve-year-old Indian girl in Mexico. She is sold by her family to be a maid in the city. While she is there, she is repeatedly raped by the patron and eventually becomes pregnant. The patroness throws her out on the street where she gives birth a few weeks later. She is given a home by a kind patroness, but, after a month, is again thrown out onto the street. No one will hire an Indian girl with a baby, so Rosa and her daughter Flor beg in the streets during the day. In the course of a year, Rosa sinks to the depths of poverty and despair and then begins to rebuild her life through the help of kind people. Eventually, she is able to overcome her shame and return home to her village to build a new life and family. Gr. 11-12.

**\*Hamilton, Virginia. *Plain City*.** Blue Sky Press, 1993.

Buhlaire Sims is a lonely and imaginative twelve-year-old girl living in the poverty-stricken Water Houses with her aunts, uncles, and her mother, who is rarely home. Her family refuses to speak about Buhlaire's father, Junior, telling her he died in Vietnam. Buhlaire discovers that her father is alive, but he is homeless and suffers from a mental illness. Yearning to have a relationship with him, regardless of his condition, Buhlaire eagerly seeks out Junior, finding him living under the underpass of a highway on the edge of town. Buhlaire eventually realizes that Junior can never fulfill his role as her father. Gr. 6-8.

**Hawthorne-Attard, Barbara. *Theories of Relativity: A Novel*.** Macmillan, 2005. ISBN# 9780805077902.

Dylan is living on the street—though not through any choice of his own, unlike some of the teenagers he meets in the same situation. He's been cut loose by his unstable mother, and lost most contact with his two younger brothers. He has nothing but his backpack stuffed with a few

precious belongings and the homeless kids he meets. At least he has his theories—no one can take those away from him. Theories like: how every fourth person throws him spare change; how no one does anything for anyone without a price; and how he just might be able to find a place in this complicated world. Gr. 9-12.

**\*Herrick, Steven.** *The Simple Gift*. University of Queensland Press. 2000.

Billy, a sixteen year old boy, leaves home to flee his alcoholic and abusive father. Billy moves into an abandoned freight car where he meets Old Bill who struggles with his tragic past and inhabits the freight train next to Billy. Billy meets Caitlin, a rich and beautiful girl, when he is at McDonalds one night waiting for rejected scraps of food. Billy and Caitlin become friends and eventually fall in love. When Caitlin's parents leave town, Caitlin and Billy invite Old Bill over to Caitlin's home for dinner. Old Bill is so appreciative of Caitlin and Billy's kindness that he tried to think of a way to thank them. When Billy is confronted by the police about his homelessness, Old Bill decides to give Billy his home. Old Bill could not go back to his old home because it is where his daughter died. Billy moves into Old Bill's house and continues to visit Old Bill at his freight car. Gr. 10-12.

**Hesse, Karen.** *Brooklyn Bridge: A Novel*. New York: Feiwel and Friends, 2008, ISBN# 978-0312378868.

In 1903 Brooklyn, fourteen-year-old Joseph Michtom's life changes for the worse when his parents, Russian immigrants, invent the teddy bear and turn their apartment into a factory. Nearby, the glitter of Coney Island contrasts with the dismal lives of children dwelling under the Brooklyn Bridge.

**Hobbs, Will.** *Bear Stone*. Atheneum/Avon, 1989.

Cloyd finds a home in the mountains away from his reservation home. Look also for the sequel, *Bear Dance*.

**Holman, Felice.** *Slake's Limbo*. Aladdin Paperbacks, 1986. ISBN# 9780689710667.

Desperate and harassed to the breaking point, Slake decides to go underground into the sheltering depths of the New York City Subway where he ends up staying for 121 days. This is a story about survival, and about a thirteen-year-old misfit's attempts to find footing in a hostile and threatening world. Gr. 9-12.

**\*Holtwijk, Ineke.** *Asphalt Angels*. Lemniscaat, 1995.

*Asphalt Angels* is based on the true story of a boy. Alex is a thirteen-year-old boy living on the streets of Rio de Janeiro. The novel opens on one of his first days on the street. He has just been thrown out by his step-father after the death of his mother. He makes friends with a boy named Robson who shows him where to find food, how to make a few *real*, and where to find safe places to sleep. Robson has the good fortune to be adopted by a lady in the community. Alex wanders in loneliness and fear until he meets Duda, the only female member of a group of street

kids called the Asphalt Angels. Alex joins them, and eventually, he becomes an equal to them. He learns to beg, steal, and run drugs. He lives in fear of violence, hunger, and death, and he wishes he had a hope of someday getting off the streets. In the end, Roy, the leader of the Asphalt Angels, is killed trying to rob a bus. The Angels scatter and Alex and Duda, in their grief, become determined to stand against the rich and all those who would try to ignore or belittle them. Gr. 10-12.

**Howe, James. *Dew Drop Dead: A Sebastian Barth Mystery*.** New York: Atheneum, 1990, ISBN# 978-0689807602.

While setting up a homeless shelter at the church, Sebastian and his friends, Corrie and David, solve the mystery of a dead man found in an abandoned inn.

**Hubbard, Jim. *Lives Turned Upside Down: Homeless Children in Their Own Words And Photographs*.** New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1996, ISBN# 978-1416968382.

Two girls and two boys, ages nine to twelve, talk about their own personal experiences with homelessness and life in shelters.

**Hughes, Dean. *Family Pose*.** New York: Atheneum, 1989.

Feeling unwanted, an eleven-year-old orphan runs away from his foster home and lives on the streets until he finds a new type of family at a hotel.

**Hyde, Catherine Ryan. *Becoming Chloe*.** New York: Alfred A. Knopf: Random House, 2006, ISBN# 978-0375832604.

A gay teenage boy and a fragile teenage girl meet while living on the streets of New York City and eventually decide to take a road trip across America to discover whether or not the world is a beautiful place. Jordy is on his own in New York City with nobody to depend on and nobody depending on him. And it's been working fine, until this girl comes along. She's 18 and blond and pretty—her world should be perfect. But she's seen things no one should ever see in their whole life—the kind of things that break a person. She doesn't seem broken, though. She seems innocent—as if she doesn't know a whole lot. Only sometimes she does. The one thing she knows for sure is that the world is an ugly place. Now her life may depend on Jordy proving her wrong. So they hit the road to discover the truth, and there's no going back from what they find out. This deeply felt, redemptive novel reveals both the dark corners and hidden joys of life's journey and the remarkable resilience of the human soul.

**James, Brian. *Tomorrow, Maybe*.** Scholastic Paperbacks, 2003. ISBN# 9780439490351.

Gretchen “Chan” is a fifteen-year-old girl who runs away from home because of her abusive step-mother. She has lived for two years on the streets of New York City. When Chan takes eleven-year-old Elizabeth—a fellow homeless runaway—under her wing, the two become fast friends and learn to help each other survive. Gr. 9-12.

**\*Jones, Patrick. *Cheated*.** New York: Walker & Co.: Distributed to the trade by Macmillan, 2008.

Mick is in the tenth grade and has recently been dumped by his girlfriend due to his own indiscretions with another girl. Furthermore, his mother recently divorced his father because of his father's indiscretions with another woman. Mick finds escape in his friends, drugs, and alcohol, but things take a serious turn when his friends kill a homeless man dubbed "the Scarecrow." Mick helps them cover up the crime, but all three are arrested for murder. Torn between protecting his friends and facing up to his responsibilities, he finally chooses to tell the police what happened, thus breaking the strong bonds he once had with his friends, while repairing ties once severed with his family. Gr. 9-12.

**\*Koja, Kathe. *The Blue Mirror*.** : Frances Foster Books: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.

Maggy, a sixteen-year-old aspiring artist, becomes romantically involved with Cole, a charming boy who is also homeless. As she grows closer to Cole and spends more time with Marianne and Jouly, two homeless girls he looks after, Maggy discovers Cole is an abusive monster and not the perfect boyfriend she thought him to be. She ends her relationship with Cole and finds solace in her art. Gr. 10-12.

**Laird, Elizabeth. *The Garbage King*.** Tandem Library Books, 2003. ISBN# 9780606310277.

This novel of unusual power tells the gripping and dramatic story of homeless street children forced to do whatever they have to do in order to stay alive in the brutal slums of an Ethiopian city. Gr. 6-8.

**Leavitt, Martine. *Heck, Superhero*.** Front Street, 2004. ISBN# 9781886910942.

Abandoned by his mentally ill mother, thirteen-year-old Heck tries to survive on his own as his mind bounces between the superhero character he imagines himself to be and the harsh reality of his life. Gr. 6-8.

**Lijewski, Christy. *Re:Play*.** Tokyopop, 2006. ISBN# 1598167375.

In this graphic novel, Izsak is a homeless teen living in the subway, playing his guitar for small change. When Cree comes upon him one evening, she knows that he is the talent that her band, Faust, needs. She recklessly invites him to come home with her so that he can meet her friend and band mate. Rail is wary of this stranger but has to admit that he is talented, and they accept him into the group. Little do they know that Izsak is watched by a secret society of supernatural beings. Gr. 9-12.

**Lopez, Steve. *The Soloist: A Lost Dream, an Unlikely Friendship, and the Redemptive Power of Music*.** New York: Penguin, 2008. ISBN: 042522600X.

In this non-fiction account, the author befriends and attempts to help homeless violinist Nathaniel Ayers. Ayers was a student at Julliard until racial pressure and Schizophrenia forced him drop out. Gr 9-12.

**Luger, Harriet.** *Bye, Bye, Bali Kai.* San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1996, ISBN# 978-0152008628.

As her once-comfortable world becomes more and more frightening, eleven-year-old Suzie is almost as worried about losing her best friend as she is about her family being evicted from their apartment.

**Marsden, Carolyn.** *Bird Springs.* 2007.

When drought and his father's absence force them to leave the Navajo reservation at Bird Springs, ten-year-old Gregory, his mother and sister move to a motel in Tuscon, Arizona, where one of Gregory's teachers helps him confront his painful past.

**Martineau, Diane.** *The Wall on 7<sup>th</sup> Street.* Llewellyn Publications, 2005. ISBN# 9780738707150.

There's something creepy about 7th Street, twelve-year-old Toby's new multicultural neighborhood. Everyone is sullen, angry, and afraid of a teen gang that rules the streets. No one has answers except for Toby's only friend, Moe, a homeless man who lives near an old warehouse bearing the gang's repulsive graffiti. By tapping into its centuries-old power—linked to a famous Iroquois peacemaker—Toby and Moe find the courage to fight the gang and take back their neighborhood. Gr. 6-8.

**McPhee, Peter.** *Runner.* Halifax: Lorimer Books, 2002. ISBN: 1550286749.

Kyle is seventeen; his sister Meghan is fourteen. When their parents divorce, they are forced to move to a new city. Kyle quickly adapts, but Meghan cannot cope and runs away from home to live on the streets. As Kyle searches for her, he comes face-to-face with the harsh realities of street life. Gr. 9-12.

**Moses, Shelia P. Joseph.** Simon and Schuster, 2008. ISBN-13: 9781416917526

For Joseph Flood, life is tough. Tough because of Mama's addiction to drugs and alcohol. Tough because Daddy is away with the army fighting in Iraq. Tough because it looks like there's no way out once you're living in a homeless shelter in a North Carolina ghetto neighborhood. And tough because Joseph is enrolled in yet another new school where he doesn't know anyone and has to keep what's going on in his life a secret. Joseph struggles to keep Mama clean and to hold their broken family together while trying to make new friends and join the school tennis team. Can a boy who's only fifteen years old win his daily battle to survive?

**Myers, Christopher.** *Fly!* New York: Jump at the Sun: Hyperion Books for Children, 2001, ISBN# 978-0786806522.

On the roof of his building, lonely Jawanza meets a homeless man who teaches him how to make friends with the sparrows and pigeons up there.

**Naidoo, Beverley.** *No Turning Back: A Novel of South Africa*. HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1997. ISBN# 9780060275051.

When abuse at home becomes too much for twelve-year-old Sipho, he runs away to the streets of Johannesburg and learns to survive in the post apartheid world. Gr. 6-8.

**Napoli, Donna Jo.** *The King of Mulberry Street*. Wendy Lamb Books, 2005. ISBN# 9780385746533.

In 1892, nine-year-old Dom's mother puts him on a ship leaving Italy, bound for America. He is a stowaway, traveling alone and with nothing of value except for a new pair of shoes from his mother. In the turbulent world of homeless children in Manhattan's Five Points, Dom learns street smarts, and not only survives, but thrives by starting his own business. Gr. 6-8.

**Nasaw, Jonathan.** *Shakedown Street*. Laurel Leaf, 1995. ISBN# 9780440219309.

After living in several communes, Caro Reilly and her Momma are homeless in San Francisco, where Caro learns survival techniques from the street people and her mother saves money from her job. Gr. 6-8.

**Nelson, Theresa.** *The Beggar's Ride*. New York: Orchard Books, 1992, ISBN# 978-0606057530.

Twelve-year-old Clare flees an unhappy home life and tries to survive on the streets of Atlantic City with a small gang of homeless kids, each of whom has his own secret reason for distrusting society.

**Neufeld, John.** *Almost a Hero*. Simon & Schuster, 1995. ISBN# 9780689319716.

Doing volunteer work at Santa Barbara's Sidewalk's End, a day-care facility for children of the homeless, Ben witnesses an instance of physical abuse and decides to take matters into his own hands.

**Nichelason, Margery G.** *Homeless or Hopeless?* Lerner Publishing Group, 1993. ISBN# 9780822526063.

This book examines the problem of homelessness in the United States, including its causes and effects, society's responsibilities, and government and private assistance programs. Gr. 9-12

**\*O'Connor, Barbara.** *How to Steal a Dog: A Novel*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007.

Georgina's father has left the family with nothing. They now have to live in the family car, moving from place to place in order to not be discovered. Georgina has difficulty coping with the new situation, but her mother does not have the money for a new apartment, so Georgina hatches a scheme to steal a dog and collect the reward money in order to pay for a new home. She and her brother find the perfect dog and steal it, but over time, Georgina comes to realize that some actions are never right no matter the situation you may be in. Gr. 6-8.

**Paulsen, Gary.** *The Crossing*. Dell, 1987.

The streets of Juarez are Manny's home.

**Parkinson, Siobhan.** *Breaking the Wishbone*. The O'Brien Press, Limited, 1999. ISBN# 9780862786359.

A group of teenagers, adrift from their families, come together a makeshift home in the House that Everyone Forgot. At first, it's just like being on holiday for Johnner, but then the harsh life of a homeless person soon becomes present—the reality of life in a Dublin squat. Gr. 10-12

**Powell, E. Sandy.** *A Chance to Grow*. Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books, 1992, ISBN# 978-0876145807.

When Joe, his sister Gracey and their mother are evicted from their apartment and left homeless, they live in shelters and on the streets, looking for work and a permanent home.

\***Pyle, Kevin C.** *Blindspot*. Henry Holt and Company, 2007.

Dean Tollridge is a boy whose frequent moves with his family may be the cause of his general disengagement with his parents and school. In his most recent neighborhood Dean leads his friends on faux-army expeditions through the woods: sometimes hide-and-seek and sometimes more serious activities like stealing an old woman's drying laundry or destroying a woodland shack. This leads to an extended conversation between the shack's tenant and Dean. Following the conversation, Dean comes back to reality by spending time with his parents, concentrating on his school work, and no longer plays army games. Gr. 12

**Rapp, Adam.** *33 Snowfish*. Candlewick Press, 2006. ISBN# 9780763629175.

On the run in a stolen car with a kidnapped baby in tow, Custis, Curl, and Boobie are three young people with deeply troubled pasts and bleak futures. As they struggle to find a new life for themselves, it becomes painfully clear that none of them will ever be able to leave the past behind. Yet for one, redemption is waiting in the unlikeliest of places. Gr. 9-12.

**Ruby, Laura.** *The Wall and the Wing*. New York: Eos Books, 2007. ISBN: 0060752572.

This story is set in a future where almost everyone can fly except for a 12-year-old homeless orphan named Gurl. Instead, Gurl can become invisible. This ability is both a help and a hindrance, and leads on her on wild search for her true identity. Gr. 6-8.

**\*Rugg, Jim & Brian Maruca. *Street Angel Volume One: The princess of poverty*. SLG Publishing, 2005.**

*Street Angel* is split into episodes. Jesse Sanchez rescues the governor's daughter from an evil geologist; restores peace between ninjas, 15<sup>th</sup> century conquistadors, and an Australian-sounding Irish astronaut; beats up a Satanist thanks to a miracle of health by Christ; assists a retired 1970's superhero sex icon; and defeats a power-bent robot with one swift kick to the head. In each story, however, Jesse's painful reality cannot be defeated so easily: she must still find food somehow. The line between reality and imagination blurs when some of Jesse's friends participate in her adventures. Gr. 11-12.

**\*Smith, Jeff. *SHAZAM! The Monster Society of Evil*. DC Comics, 2007.**

Little homeless child Billy Batson is selected to be the host for the guardian spirit Captain Marvel, a Supermanesque crime-fighter infused with the powers of the Olympians. After accidentally inviting an alien invader to Earth, Billy, his new alter-ego, and his newfound sister Mary must find a way to stop both the alien and a greedy government official from destroying humankind. Gr. 6-8.

**Snyder, Zilpha Keatley. *The Gypsy Game*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1997, ISBN# 978-0440412588.**

Six imaginative schoolmates embark on a game in which they pretend to be gypsies, but when one of the boys runs away and takes up with a group of homeless people, the game threatens to become all too real.

**\*Spinelli, Jerry. *Maniac Magee*. Little, Brown and Company, 1990. ISBN: 0316807222.**

Jeffrey Lionel Magee's parents are killed in a train accident when he is three years old. He is sent to live with his aunt and uncle who hate each other, but refuse to get a divorce. When Jeffrey is ten years old, he grows so angry with their refusal to speak to each other he runs away in search of a more loving home. After a year of drifting, Jeffrey arrives in the racially divided town of Two Mills. All the white people live on the West End and all the African American people live on the East End. Jeffrey seems unaware of the racial tension in the town, and crosses freely back and forth between the West and East Ends. Jeffrey gains celebrity status among the kids—and eventually among the adults—of Two Mills for his amazing athletic feats. This earns Jeffrey the nickname “Maniac” Magee. He finds a home with Amanda Beale and her family in the East End, but leaves when the family is harassed for adopting a white child. Jeffrey finds a home in the West End with an elderly man named Grayson, but Grayson dies of old age after they are together for only a year. Jeffrey goes to live in the buffalo pen at the zoo and continues to run everyday around Two Mills. He makes an attempt to overcome the racial barriers in the town, but is unsuccessful. The novel ends with Amanda Beale finding him at the zoo and convincing him to come back home with her. Although many of the people in Two Mills are still prejudiced, Jeffrey at last has a home and family. Gr. 6-9.



**Spinelli, Jerry. *Milkweed*.** Random House Children's Books, 2005. ISBN# 9780440420057.

He's a boy who lives in the streets of Warsaw. He's a boy who steals food for himself and the other orphans. He's a boy who believes in bread, and mothers, and angels. He's a boy who wants to be a Nazi some day, with tall shiny jackboots and a gleaming Eagle hat of his own. Until the day that suddenly makes him change his mind. When the trains come to empty the Jews from the ghetto of the damned, he's a boy who realizes it's safest of all to be nobody. Gr. 6-8

**Stearman, Kaye. *Homelessness*.** Austin: Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1999, ISBN# 978-0750249348.

This book looks at some of the causes and experiences of homelessness throughout the world and considers how societies might solve the problem and ensure every person a safe place to live.

**Stewart, Gail B. *Homeless*.** 1996. ISBN-13: 9781560063315

This book presents first-person accounts of individuals and families who are living as homeless persons in America's cities.

**Strasser, Todd. *Can't Get There From Here*.** Simon & Schuster Book for Young Readers, 2004. ISBN# 9780689841699.

Her street name is Maybe. She lives with a tribe of homeless teens—runaways and throwaways, kids who have no place to go other than the cold city streets, and no family except for one another. Abused, abandoned, and forgotten, they struggle against the cold, hunger, and constant danger. With the frigid winds of January comes a new girl: Tears, a twelve-year-old whose mother doesn't believe her stepfather abuses her. As the other kids start to disappear—victims of violence, addiction, and exposure—Maybe tries to help Tears get off the streets...if it's not already too late. Gr. 9-12.

**Summer, Lauralee. *Learning Joy from Dogs without Collars*.** Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2003. ISBN# 9780743201025.

The author tells the story of her life growing up as the child of a single, often homeless mother, and discusses how circumstances conspired to gain her entrance to Harvard where she came to know her father, and figured out her place in the world. Gr. 9-12.

**Talbot, Bryan. *The Tale of One Bad Rat*.** Dark Horse Comics, 1995. ISBN# 9781569710777.

Helen, a homeless girl who feels a link to author Beatrix Potter, flees her father's sexual abuse and follows the path the writer took on her own escape into a new life in the Lake District of England. Gr. 9-12.

**Taylor, Mildred D. *Let the Circle Be Unbroken*.** Puffin Books, 1981.

The middle book of the three books about Cassie Logan and her family, this story depicts the power of home and family to sustain a person through difficult times.

**Van Draanen, Wendelin.** *Runaway*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2006. ISBN# 9780375835223.

“It’s a cold, hard, cruel fact that my mother loved heroin more than she loved me.” Holly is in her fifth foster home in two years and she’s had enough. She’s run away before and always been caught quickly. But now she’s older and wiser—she’s twelve—and this time she gets away clean. Through tough, tender, angry, and funny journal entries, Holly spills her story. We travel with her across the country, hopping trains, scamming food, sleeping in parks or homeless encampments. And we also travel with her across the gaping holes in her heart as she finally comes to terms with her mother’s addiction and death. *Runaway* is a remarkably uplifting portrait of a girl still young, stubborn, and naive enough to hold out hope for finding a better place in the world and within her. Gr. 6-8

**Wallace, Barbara Brooks.** *Secret in St. Something*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2001, ISBN# 978-0689856013.

Fleeing from a cruel step-father, eleven-year-old Robin takes his baby brother and finds shelter with street boys living in a church in a tenement area of New York City.

\***Walls, Jeannette.** *The Glass Castle*. Simon and Schuster. 2005.

While Jeannette Walls was growing up, she and family moved constantly. Her parents were never able to hold steady jobs, so when times got tough they packed up their car and moved to a new location. In between moves, there were times when the Walls family did not have a home, had to sleep in their car, or had to live in crumbling establishments with no electricity or plumbing. After the family settled in a small town in West Virginia, the four Walls children decide that they have to escape from their parents. One by one, the Walls children move to New York to establish lives for themselves. Finally, Jeannette’s parents move to New York and become homeless. Jeannette and her siblings face the challenges of supporting their homeless parents and of coming to terms with their own pasts. Gr. 12.

\***Walters, Eric.** *Sketches*. Viking, 2007.

After fleeing from her suburban home, fourteen-year-old Dana struggles to survive in the alleys, squats, and subway stations of downtown Toronto. Dana’s graffiti on an underpass catches the eye of a counselor at Sketches, a drop-in center where homeless teens can express themselves through art. Through her art, Dana begins to confront the reason she left home: her stepfather sexually abused her. Dana realizes her younger sister may also be in danger. Dana reunites with her mother at a Sketches gallery showing, determined to return home to help her sister. Gr. 6+

**Walters, Eric.** *Shattered*. Penguin Books Canada, 2007. ISBN# 9780143312260.

In order to pass civics class, fifteen-year-old Ian must complete community volunteer service. Choosing to work at “The Club” sounds like fun, until he arrives at what turns out to be a soup

kitchen for the homeless in an unsafe part of the city. Gr. 6-8

**\*Whelan, Gloria. *Homeless Bird*.** Harper Collins, 2000.

*Homeless Bird* is the story of Koly, a thirteen-year-old girl living in India. She marries a sickly boy who dies shortly after their wedding, and Koly is left to survive with a bitter mother-in-law and an absent father-in-law. When the mother-in-law is widowed and decides to move, she abandons Koly in Vrindavan, a city of widows, with only her clothes and a quilt she embroidered. Koly manages to survive with the help of strangers and, after time, is able to support herself with her embroidery skills. In the end, Koly decides to marry a man whom she loves and who will support her passion for embroidery. Gr. 9-10.

**\*Yansky, Brian. *Wonders of the World*.** Llewellyn Publications, 2007.

Soon after his mother remarries, Eric runs away from his home in Omaha. He decides to live on the streets of Riverton, Nebraska, a city in which his absent father once lived. As Eric and his friends Catgirl and Payback become involved in drugs, prostitution, and revenge, Eric discovers his talent for acting and becomes immersed in his role for a local play. His love for theatre ultimately saves Eric from inevitable death, unlike his friends. Gr. 10-12.