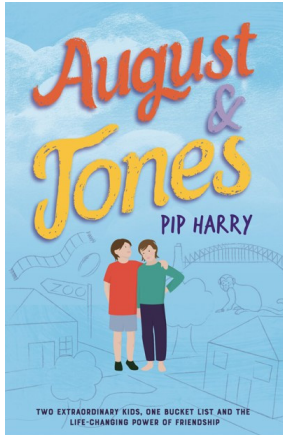


# The CBCA 2023 Book of the Year Shortlist Books



## Younger Readers Category



### August & Jones

Pip Harry

Published by Hachette Australia - ISBN 9780734420350

August and Jones explores complex and challenging concepts such as parental expectations, drought, unemployment, changing homes and schools, anxiety, depression and childhood cancer. The characterisation is strong, with adults and children presented in an authentic and believable way. Contrasts in family life are highlighted with Jones's supportive family juxtaposed with August's angry father, depressed mother and sibling ties. The book is written expertly and sensitively, balanced with humour, showing how friendship, love, personal strength and belief in oneself and others can help overcome difficulties, change and loss. Jones' cancer is never used for sympathy, and she remains positive despite the hardships she faces.



### Evie and Rhino

Neridah McMullin

Published by Walker Books Australia - ISBN 9781760654207

Inspired by true events, Evie and Rhino is a moving and entertaining story about love, friendship, grief and how making connections can bring about change and healing. The characterisation is strong and builds as the story is told from the interchanging perspectives of Evie and Rhino. The small illustrations that indicated a change in perspective were subtle and refined, matching the style of the prose perfectly. A real strength in the book is how the plot develops, and the story grows seamlessly across the characters. The author's notes and historical details included provide background knowledge of the events.



### The Raven's Song

Zana Fraillon & Bren MacDibble

Published by Allen & Unwin - ISBN - 9781761065798

A stunning novel set in both the near and distant futures linked by the ancient motifs of the raven, the land and bog bodies preservation being the theme that ties everything together but never overshadows the characters' emotional journeys: Phoenix's loss and world in pieces, and Shel's discovery challenging everything she ever knew. Masterfully written and engaging, each object, action and word choice is purposeful. Pandemics, climate change and conservation, are the backdrop for this story, told in a way that never intrudes on the reader's journey and desire to explore the world. It provides parallels between our own reality and the resulting in an engaging and thought-provoking read.



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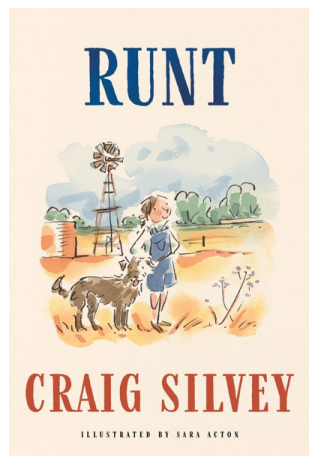
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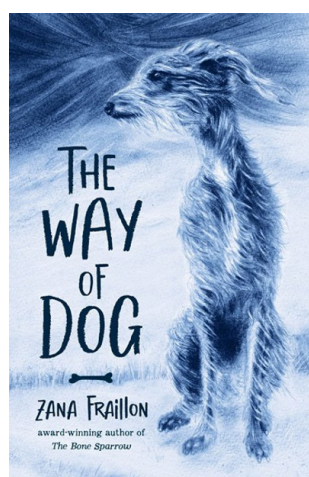


### Runt

Craig Silvey

Published by Allen & Unwin - ISBN 9781761067846

The plot and characters are presented simply, yet they are complex, strong, witty, and evoke a reflection on life's meaning, purpose and what is truly important. This book is about the struggles of country life but also about community and how it rallies around a girl and her dog. Annie's attempts to fix everything are good natured and her eventual realization that not everything needs to be fixed is heartfelt and well earned. The use of language and humorously named villains have the reader cheering for Annie and Runt's success. This delightful story of human spirit, family love and communal support is perfect for the Younger Readers age group. The beautiful hard-cover, dust jacket, endpapers and delightful illustrations make this an instant favourite

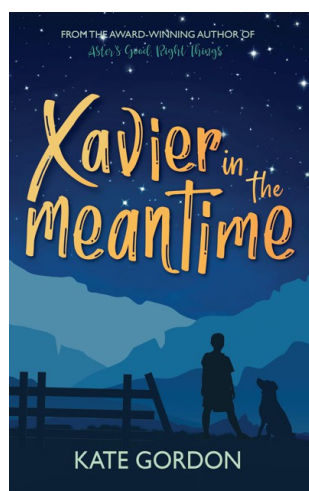


### The Way of Dog

Zana Fraillon

Published by University of Queensland Press - ISBN 9780702265563

This beautifully written novel manages to perfectly balance ongoing grief and sadness with the ordinary everyday-ness of life in a positive way. Authentic characters and character development support a storyline that feels genuine and realistic in its arc, with its rapid pace mirroring the onset of the disease and deterioration of the main character. The themes of family, love, loss, grief, death, and life after death are gently explored without preaching, and these serious elements are set against the aspects of first love, adventure and friendship. The author handles the intense emotions of the story deftly and without artifice - every laugh and tear the reader experiences is earned. While the story is told almost entirely through Abby's eyes, voice and feelings, it is flagged quite early on that the outcome of the book is inevitable. Absolutely heartbreaking and real.



### Xavier in the Meantime

Kate Gordon

Published by Riveted Press - ISBN 9780645218091

This book enables readers to delve into the impact of mental health issues in an authentic and age-appropriate way without being too explicit and confrontational. The characters are realistic in their struggles and the thought patterns are immersive and relatable. The link to the black dog and how it is described is true to life and offers hope without a cure. It also shows the importance of a supportive community and how it may work. Despite the heaviness that permeates the text, the plot leaves the reader with a sense of conclusion and hope for the characters.

