

How to Diversify Your Children's and Young Adult Book Collection

on lines of race, disability, gender, and sexuality

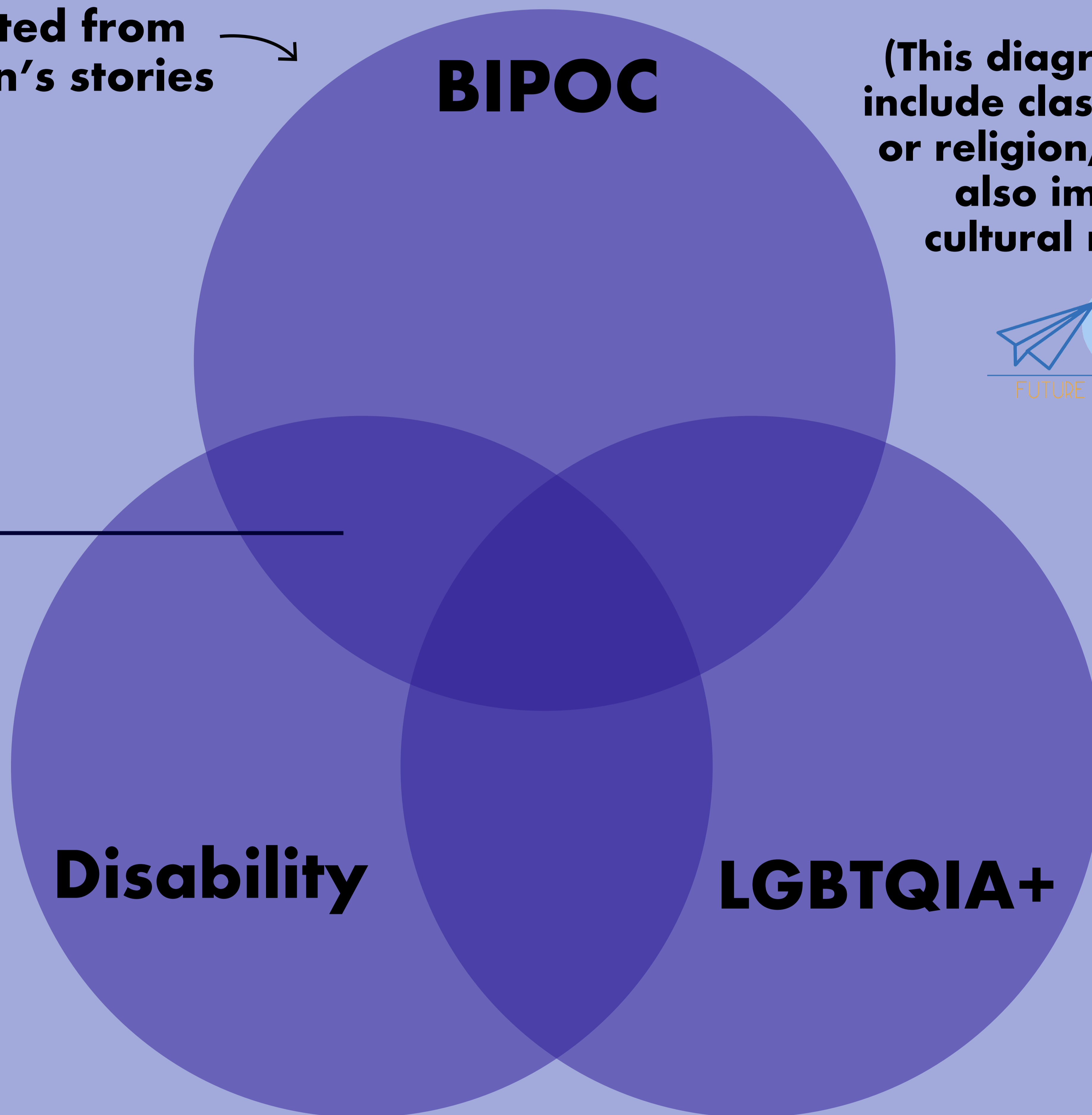
→
Strategies to find, and stay up-to-date on,
books that represent ALL children



Seeing ourselves reflected in the books that we read and love has a major impact on our self-perception, self-worth, and self-confidence.

Teachers and caregivers have a duty to create a reading list that reflects as many student experiences as possible.

For Example:
Communities that are often overlooked, minimized, or omitted from children's stories



(This diagram doesn't include class, language, or religion, which are also important cultural markers.)



This is no easy task: a student who is both BIPOC and autistic, for example, may not feel represented in "Rain Reign" (a story about a White fifth grader with autism.)

The goal: creating a book collection that covers every section of this venn diagram.

(visit our blog for an example collection at futureleadersincubator.org/category/blog)

First Steps

1. Categorize your existing books into groupings like the ones below:



Books with Native American characters



Books with Autistic characters



Books with Muslim characters

2. Involve your students: Ask them to come up with categories they think are important, and then categorize your books even further! For example:



Books with Black, Autistic characters



Books with Asian, gay characters



Books with first gen immigrants

First Steps (continued)

3. Identify which categories are too sparse and focus on filling them up:



4. Evaluate where you're buying books

Places like Scholastic, for instance, have disproportionately few authors of color. Consider using online stores like Mahogany Books, Sistah SciFi, Loyalty Bookstores, and Semicolon Bookstore.

How to find titles and authors that reflect racially diverse, LGBTQIA+, and disabled people experiences

Conscious Teaching Practices

Addressing diversity through children's literature can feel daunting, but you're not alone. FLI is committed to continued learning and growth with fellow educators.

**Check out this free, online resource:
@pranoo10 on Instagram**



FLI's Education and Training Specialist, Pranoo Kumar, hosts a weekly "Shades of Brown" Read Aloud Time! Uploaded to Instagram TV, Pranoo reads a new book each week focused on BIPOC children and their experiences.

Keep following FLI for a glimpse into best practices for culturally aware asynchronous read-aloud practices in Pk-2nd grade!

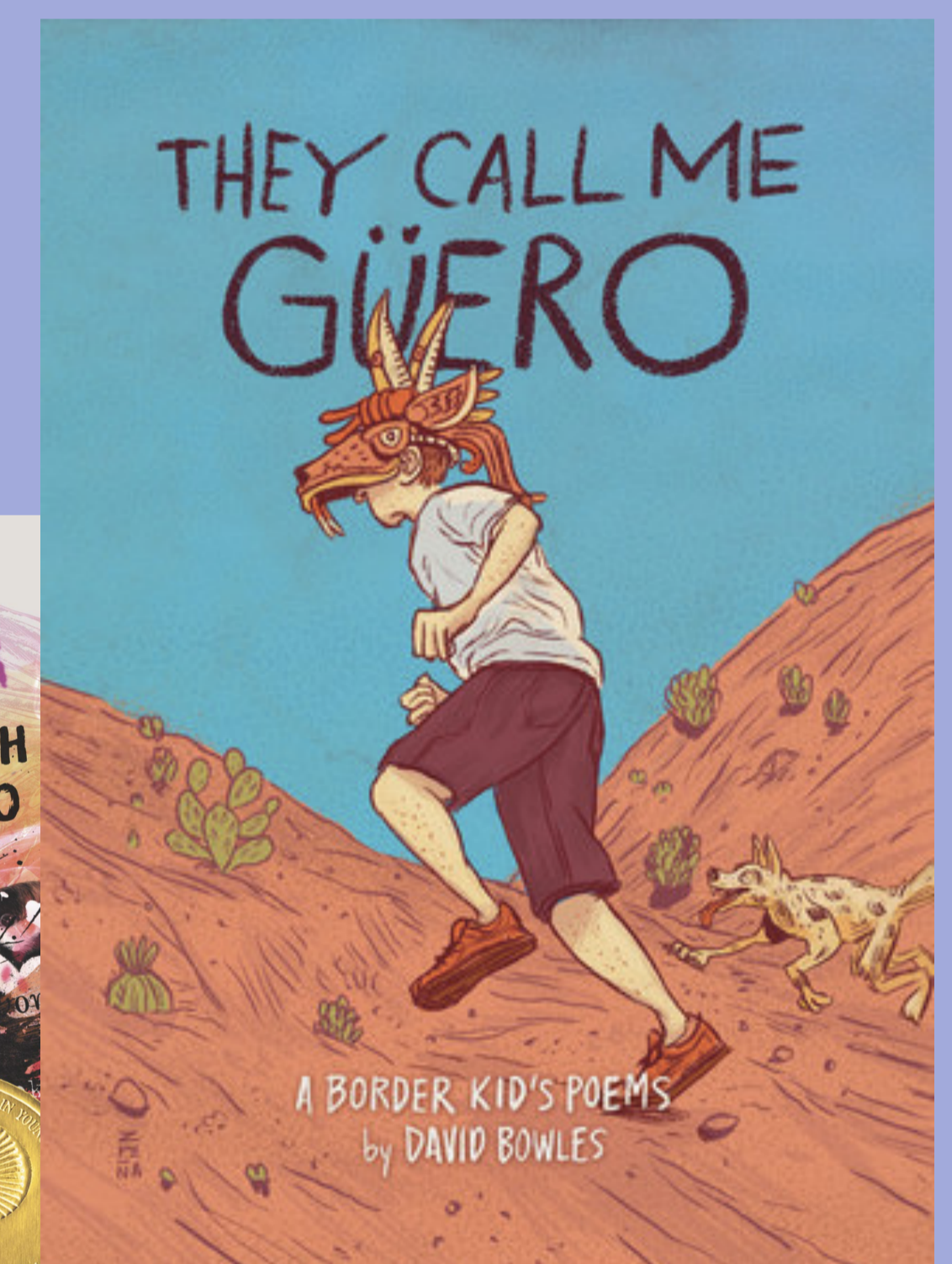
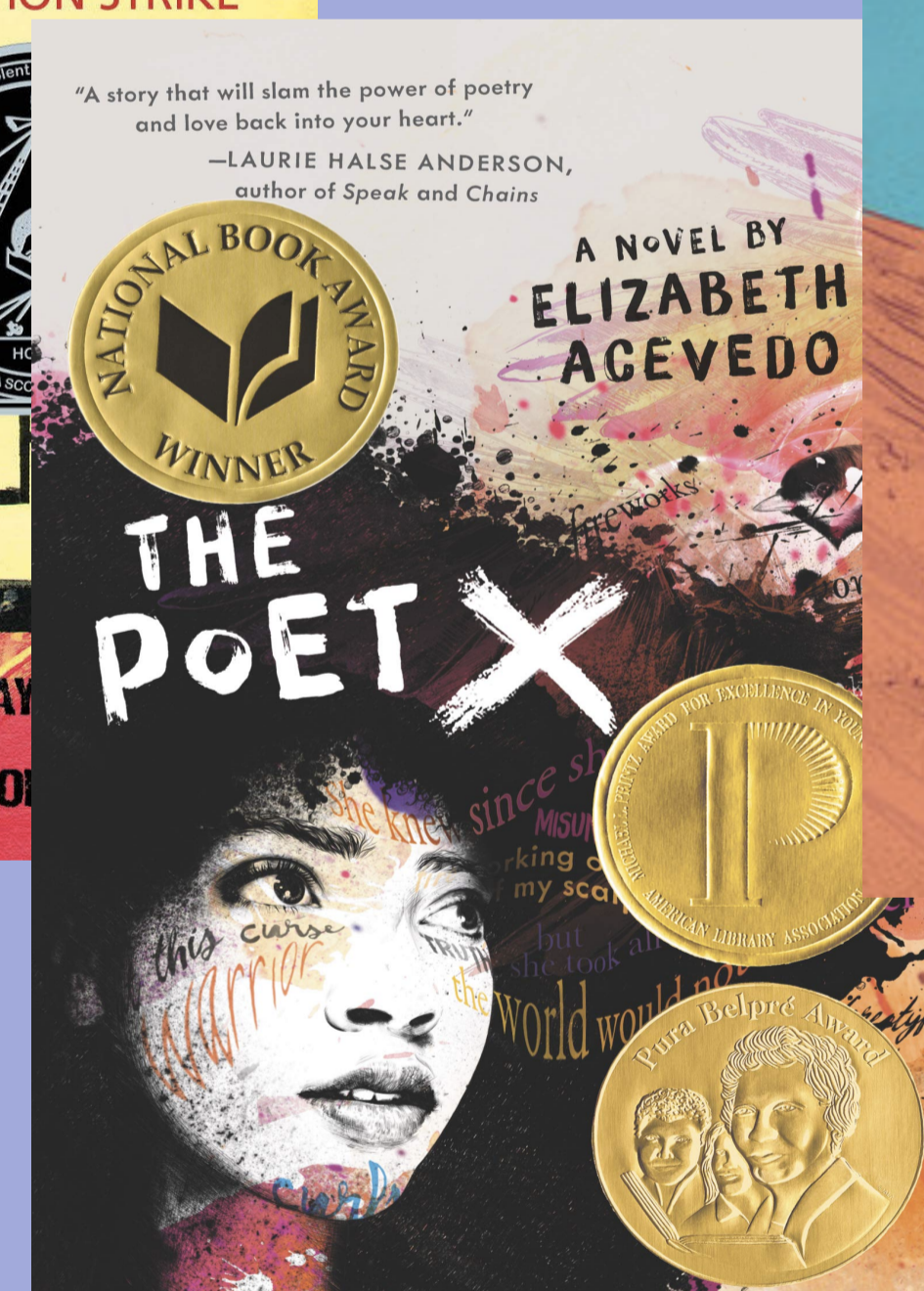
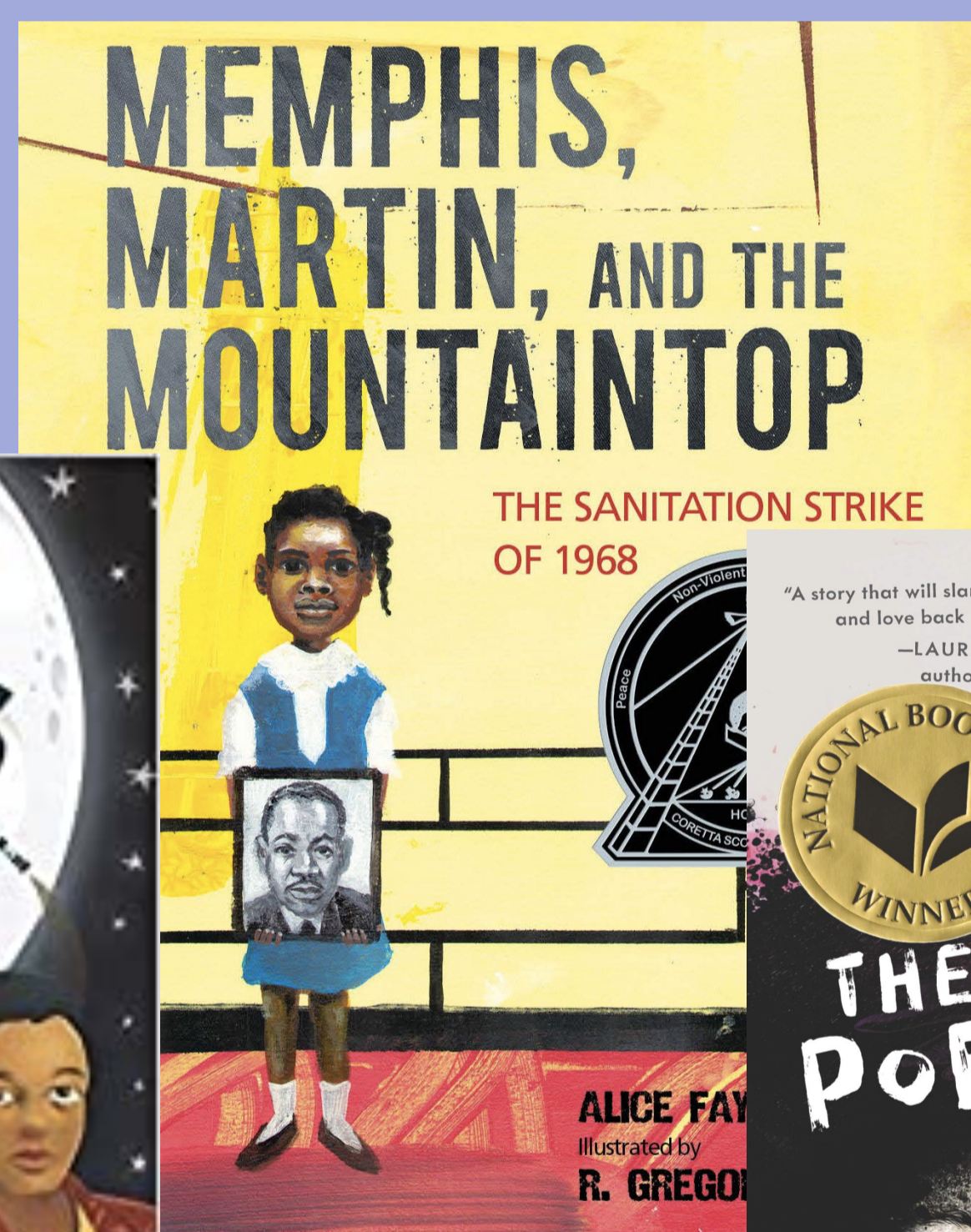
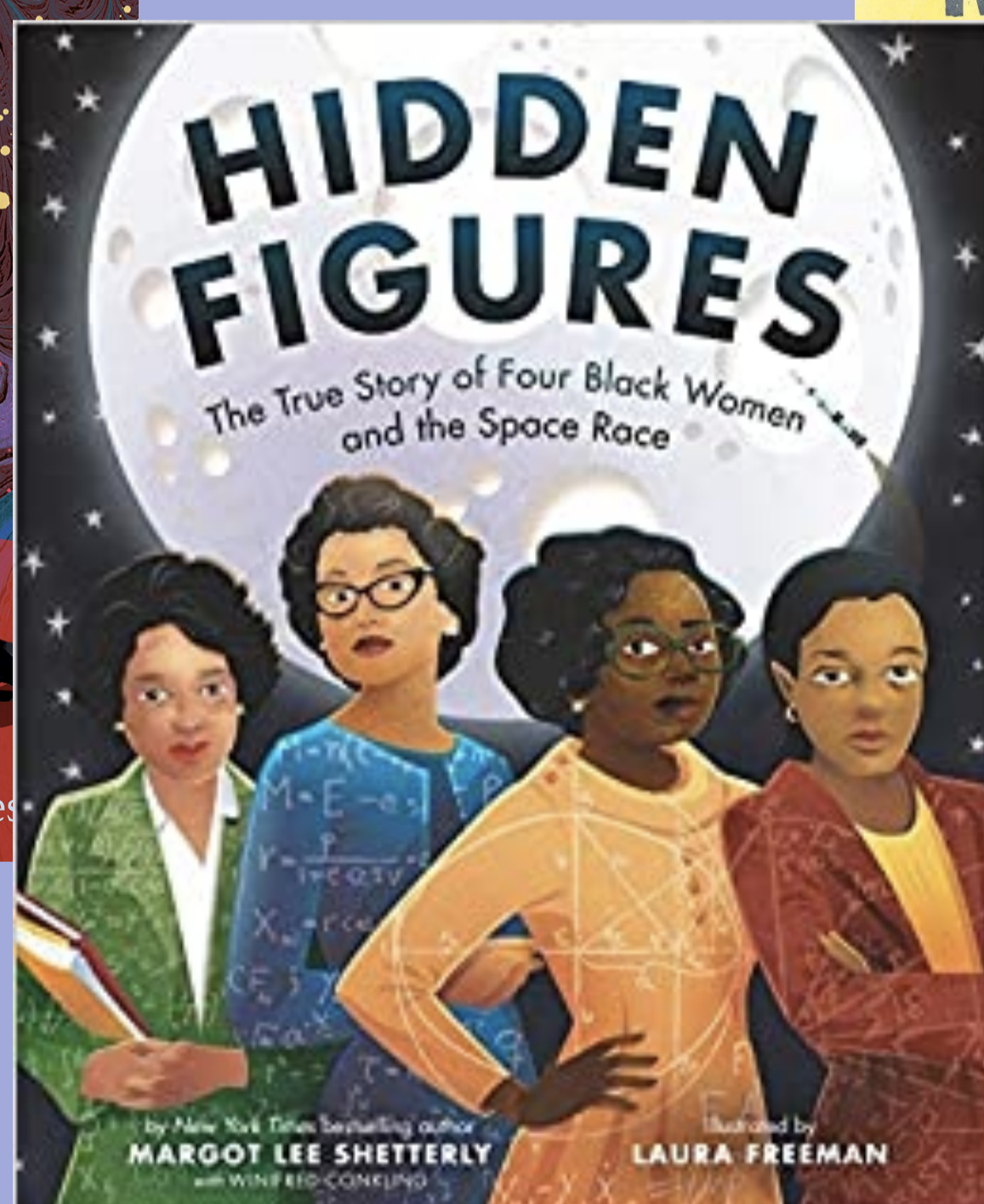
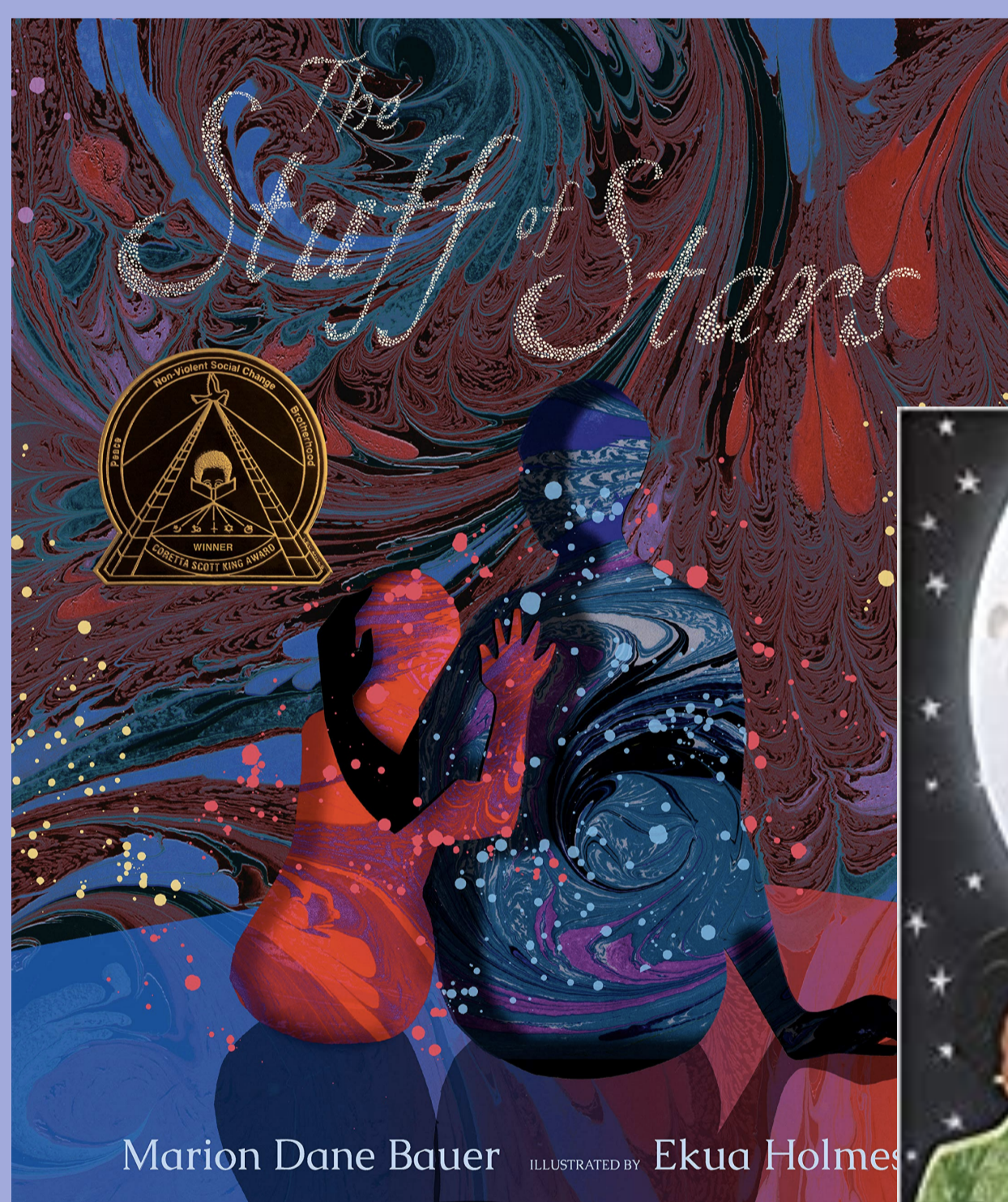
Race

How to find children's and Young Adult (YA) books with BIPOC characters and storylines that reflect BIPOC experiences

Follow These Awards:

Coretta Scott King
Book Award

The Pura Belpré
Award



For exceptional books by African Americans about the Black experience.

For work by Latinx writers and illustrators that “celebrates the Latinx experience ... for children and youth”.

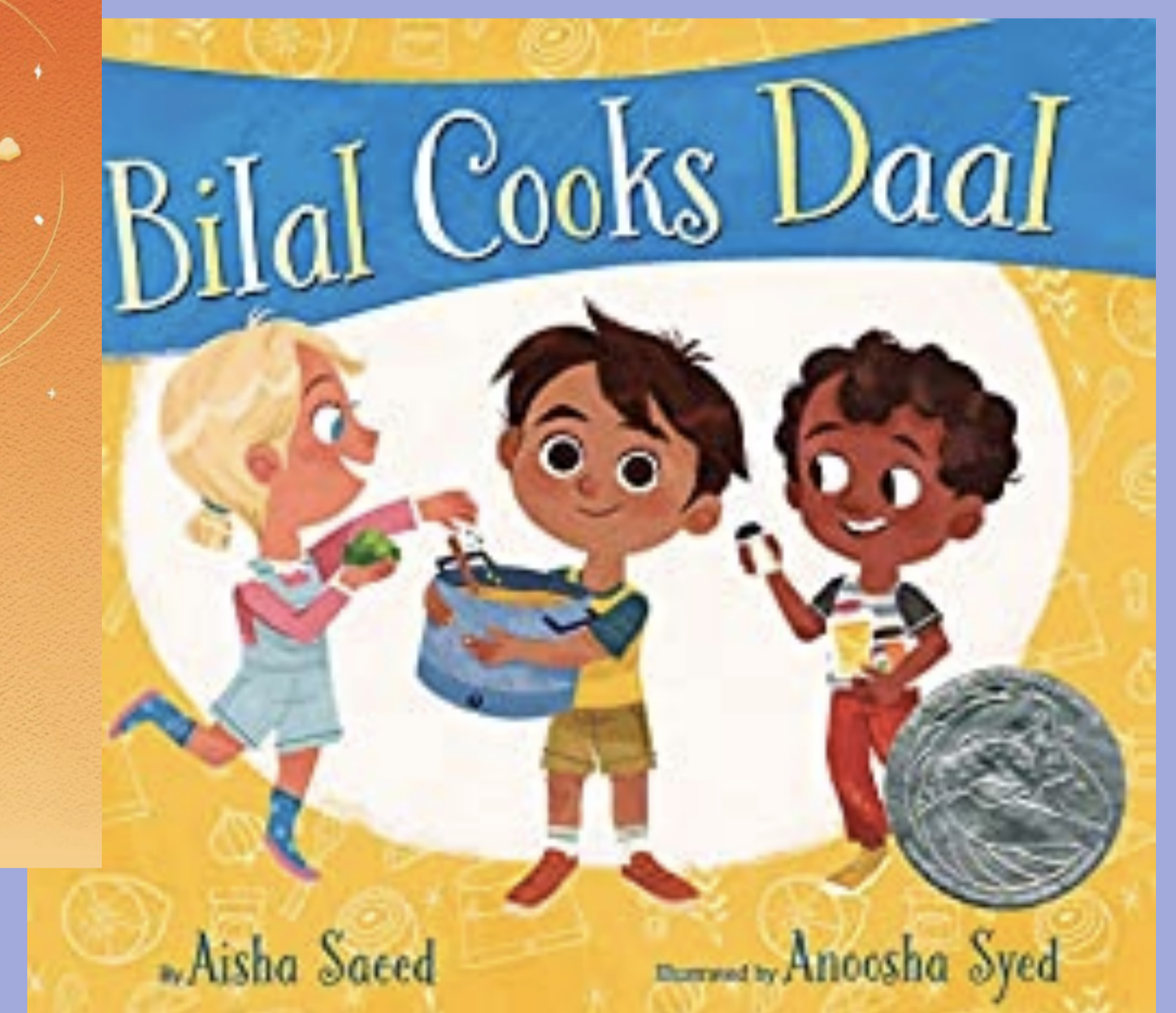
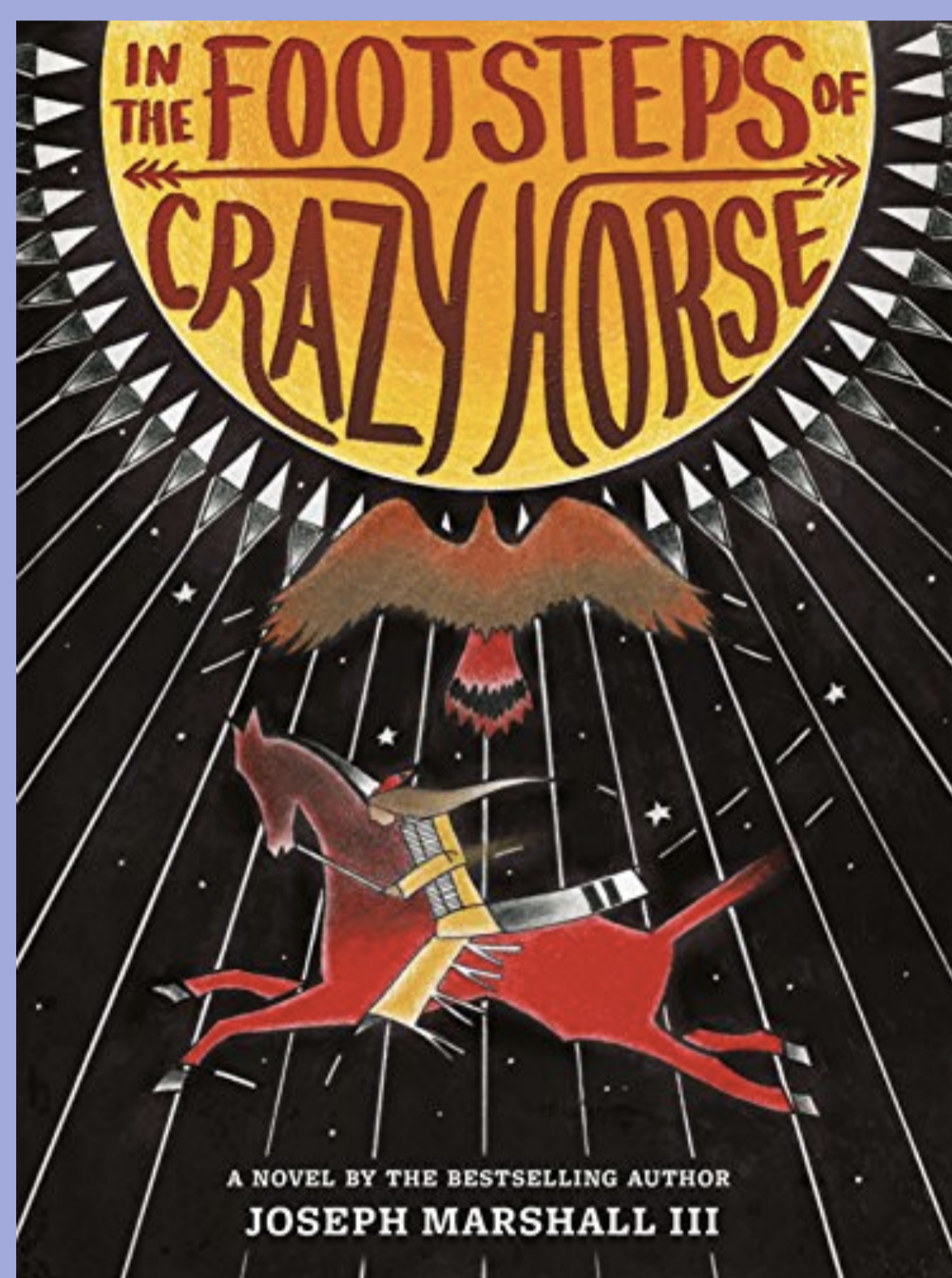
Race (Continued)

How to find children's and YA books with BIPOC characters and storylines that reflect BIPOC experiences

Follow These Awards:

The American Indian Youth Literature Award

Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature



For exceptional writing by Native American authors and about Native American experiences

For exceptional writing by Asian authors and about Asian experiences

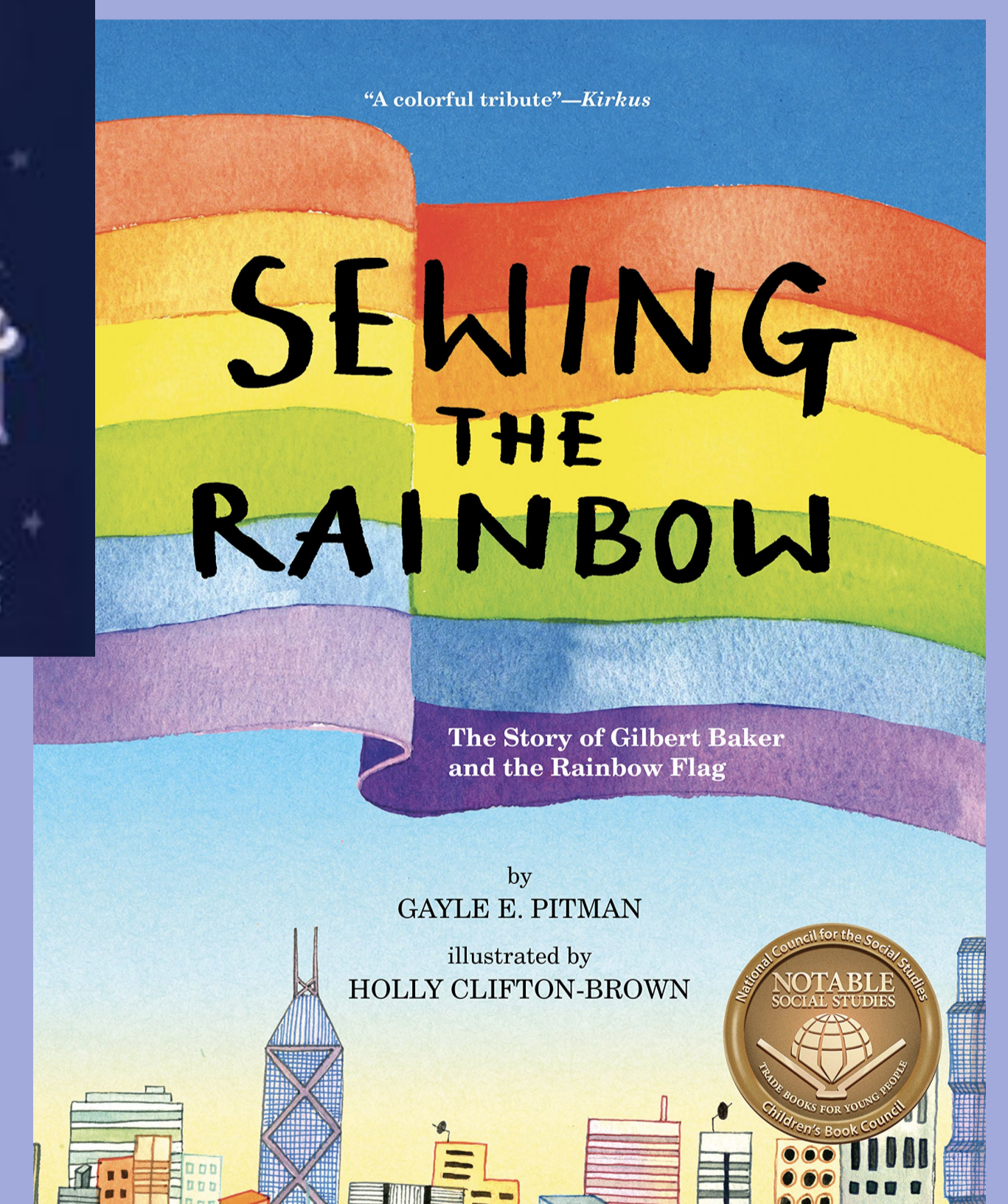
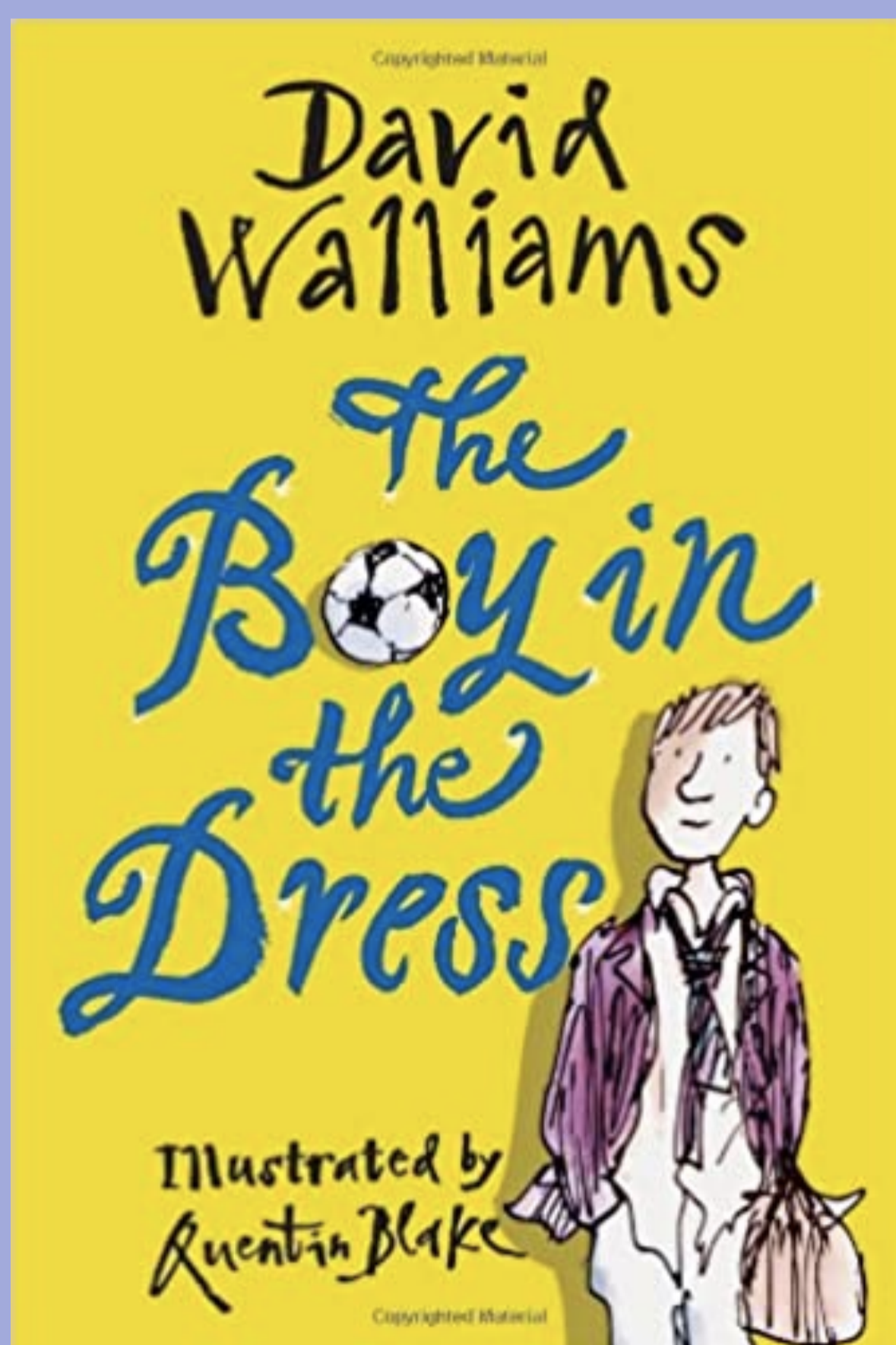
LGBTQIA+

How to find children's and YA books with LGBTQIA+ characters and storylines that reflect LGBTQIA+ experiences

Follow These Awards:

Stonewall Book Awards
(Children's and YA)

The Rainbow Book
List



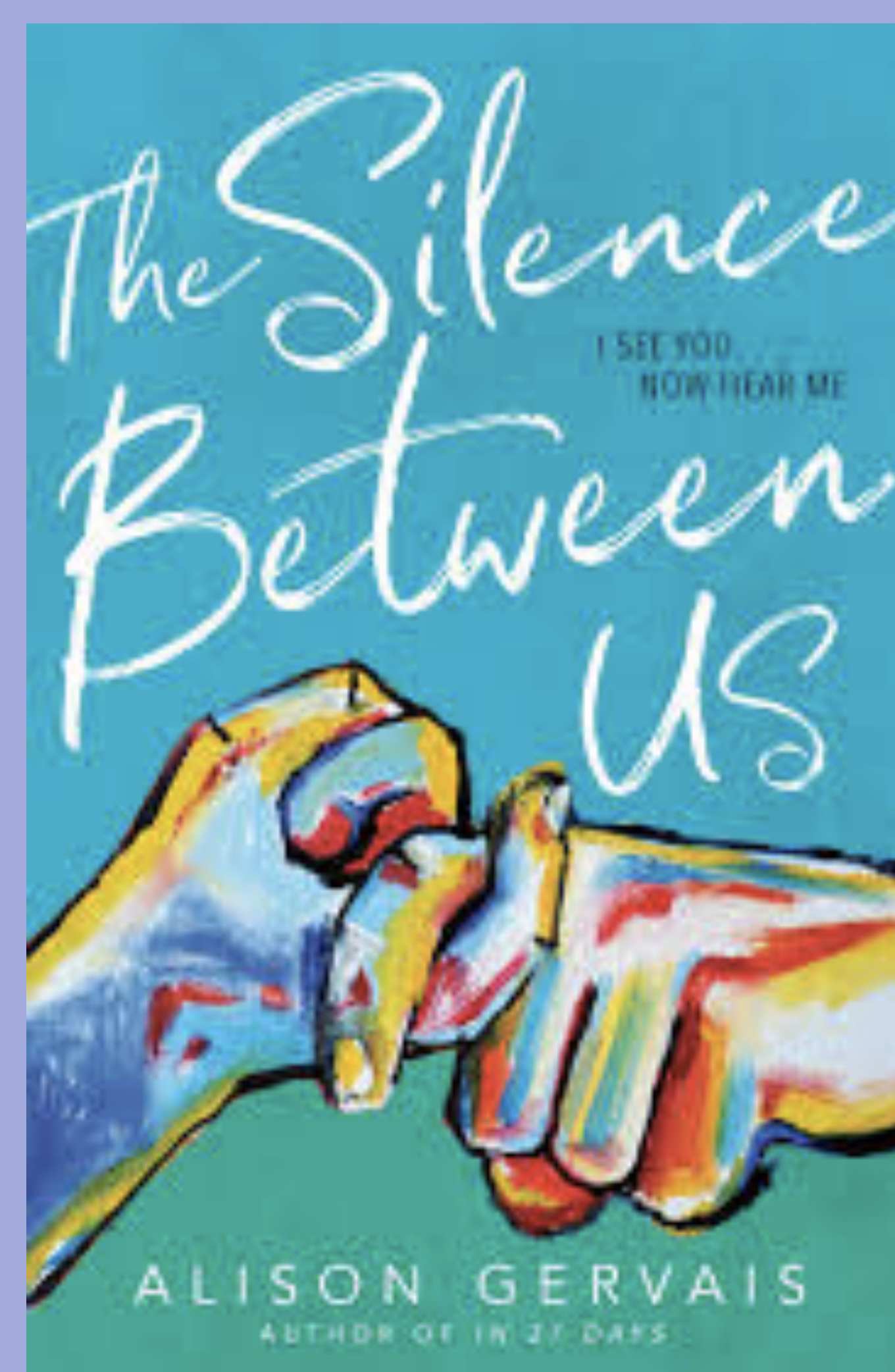
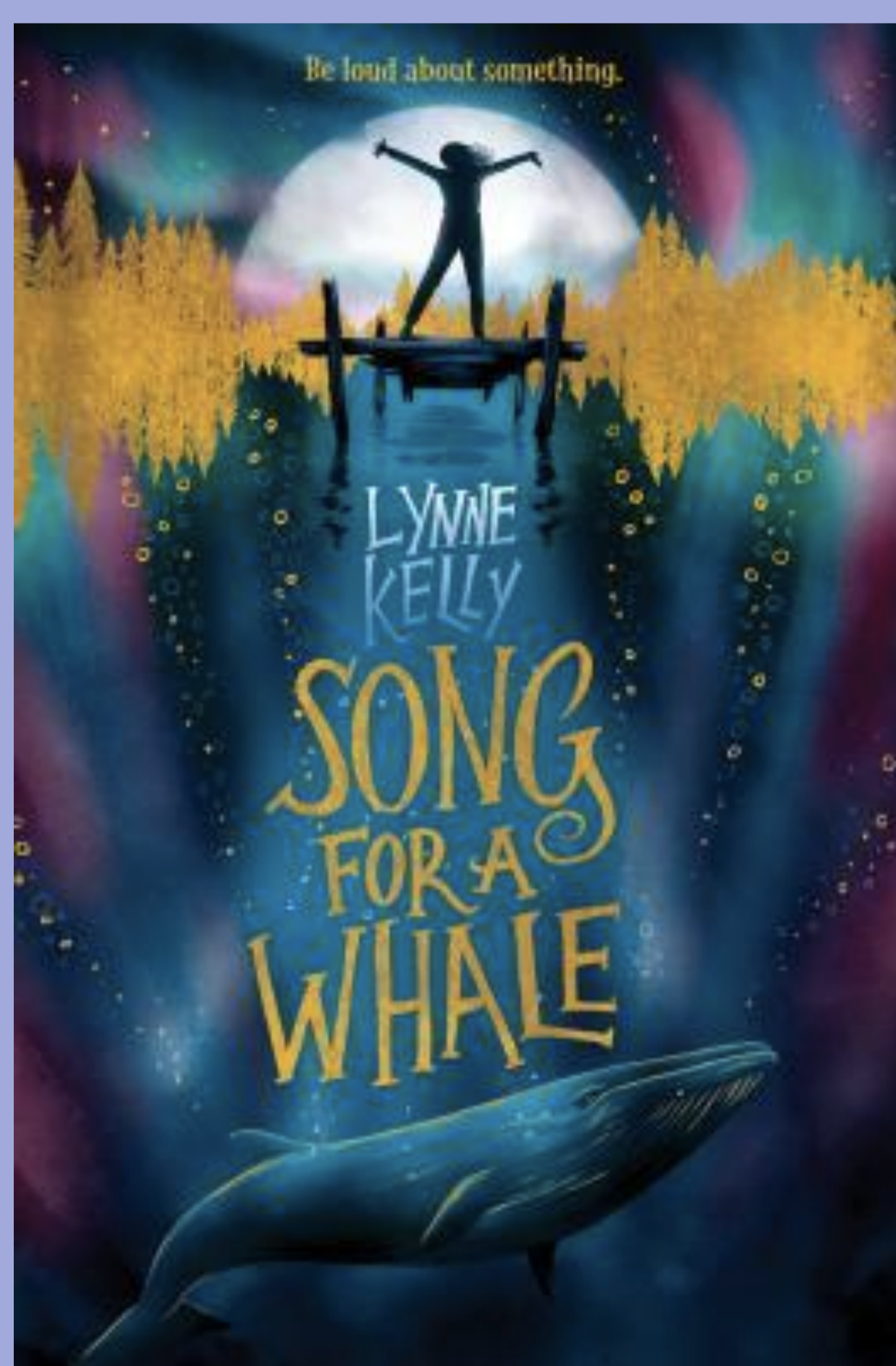
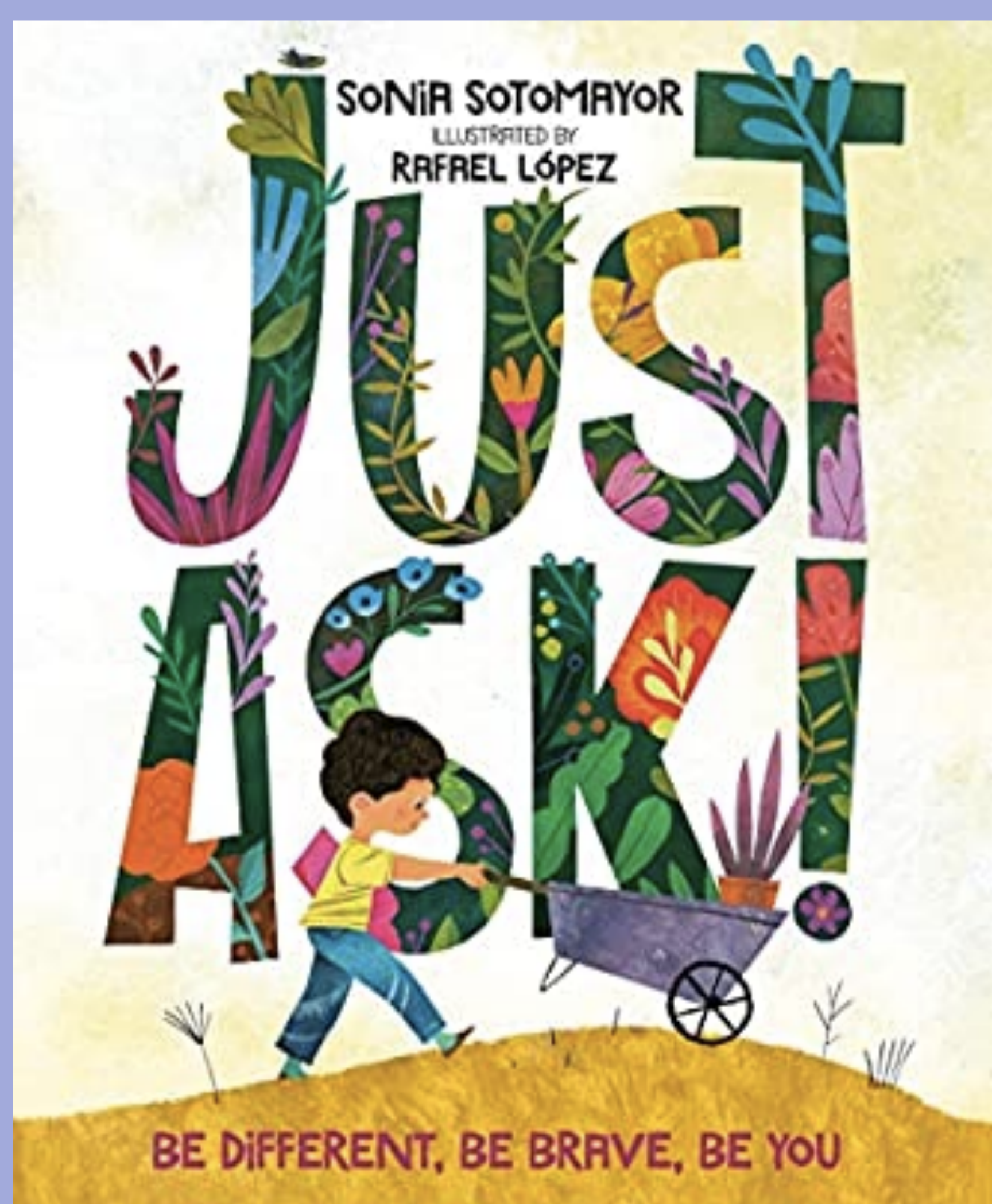
For exceptional writing about the LGBTQIA+ experience for children and young adults.

Disability

How to find children's and YA books with disabled characters and storylines that reflect the lived experiences of disabled children

Follow The Schneider Family Book Awards:

Given in 3 categories - picture books, middle-grade novels, and young adult novels

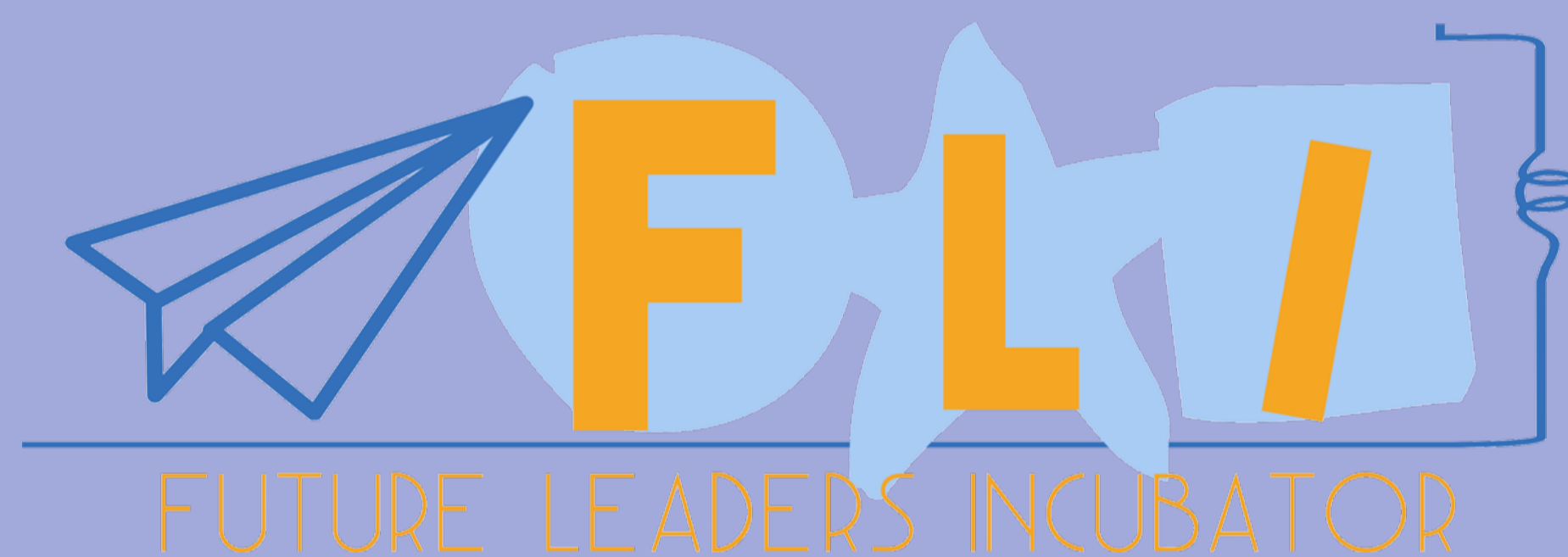


To “honor an author or illustrator for a book that embodies an artistic expression of the disability experience for child and adolescent audiences”.

We Can Help!

FLI works with partner schools to create multicultural curriculum, from ELA to Mathematics, that reflects the diversity of its community and responds to their students' needs.

Contact info@futureleadersincubator.org if you're interested in working with us!



“Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their own mirrors in books.” - Rudine Sims Bishop