**YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults**:  **2018**   
Four other books were finalists for the award: “#NotYourPrincess: Voices of Native American Women,” edited by Mary Beth Leatherdale and Lisa Charleyboy and published by Annick Press; “Eyes of the World: Robert Capa, Gerda Taro, and the Invention of Modern Photojournalism,” written by Marc Aronson and Marina Budhos and published by Henry Holt, an imprint of Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group; “The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their Lives,” written by Dashka Slater and published by Farrar Straus Giroux, an imprint of Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group and “The Whydah: A Pirate Ship Feared, Wrecked, and Found,” written by Martin W. Sandler and published by Candlewick Press.

**Winner**: Vincent and Theo: The Van Gogh Brothers

Author: Deborah Heiligman

As she did in *Charles and Emma* (2009), her biography of the Darwins, Heiligman renders a nuanced portrait of the complex, devoted, and enduring relationship between the Van Gogh brothers. Meticulously researched, drawing on the 658 letters Vincent wrote to Theo during his lifetime, Deborah Heiligman weaves a tale of two lives intertwined and the love of the Van Gogh brothers

Though Vincent and Theo unmistakably looked like brothers, they could not have been more opposite in habits and temperament; still, they pledged to each other as teenagers “to keep the bond between them strong and intimate.” Heiligman explains: “They will be more than brothers, more than friends. They will be companions in the search for meaning in life and meaning in art….And they will, when needed, carry each other’s parcels.” She reveals their unfailing devotion to this pledge by drawing on the hundreds of letters they exchanged in their tragically short lifetimes, quoting extensively and adeptly integrating them into the narrative. She frames the story of their relationship as a series of gallery exhibits (introducing each with a black-and-white reproduction of a representative piece) and varies her writing style to reflect Vincent’s work in different media such as sketching, drawing, and painting. Some depictions are vivid and richly textured, like Vincent’s oil paintings, while others are lean and sharp, like his sketches and drawings. Her exegesis of a lesser-known painting, *The Laakmolen near The Hague (The Windmill)*, which she sees as essential to understanding the brothers’ relationship, features typically painstaking description and analysis. It and several others are reproduced in a full-color insert (not seen for review).

**Honor**:

1. #NotYourPrincess: Voices of Native American Women

Author: Mary Beth Leatherdale and Lisa Charleyboy

Whether looking back to a troubled past or welcoming a hopeful future, the powerful voices of Indigenous women across North America resound in this book. In the same style as the best-selling Dreaming in Indian, #NotYourPrincess presents an eclectic collection of poems, essays, interviews, and art that combine to express the experience of being a Native woman. Stories of abuse, humiliation, and stereotyping are countered by the voices of passionate women making themselves heard and demanding change. Sometimes angry, often reflective, but always strong, the women in this book will give teen readers insight into the lives of women who, for so long, have been virtually invisible.

1. Eyes of the World: Robert Capa, Gerda Taro, and the Invention of Modern Photojournalism

Author: Marc Aronson and Marina Budhos

“If your pictures aren’t good enough, you aren’t close enough.” --- Robert Capa

Robert Capa and Gerda Taro were young Jewish refugees, idealistic and in love. As photographers in the 1930s, they set off to capture their generation's most important struggle --- the fight against fascism. Among the first to depict modern warfare, Capa, Taro and their friend Chim took powerful photographs of the Spanish Civil War that went straight from the action to news magazines. They brought a human face to war with their iconic shots of a loving couple resting, a wary orphan, and, always, more and more refugees --- people driven from their homes by bombs, guns and planes.

Today, our screens are flooded with images from around the world. But Capa and Taro were pioneers, bringing home the crises and dramas of their time --- and helping give birth to the idea of bearing witness through technology.

With a cast of characters ranging from Langston Hughes and George Orwell to Pablo Picasso and Ernest Hemingway, and packed with dramatic photos, posters and cinematic magazine layouts, here is Capa and Taro’s riveting, tragic and ultimately inspiring story.

1. The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their Lives

Author: Dashka Slater

On Monday, November 4th, 2013, in Oakland, California, the lives of two teenagers unexpectedly crossed and forever changed the direction of their futures. Sasha, an agender teenager, was riding the 57 bus home from high school and was set on fire by another teenager, Richard. Sasha, a white middle class teenager, who attended private school in Oakland, identified as neither male nor female, and prefers to use the pronoun “they.” Richard, an African American teen who attended public high school in Oakland, lived with his mother in adverse conditions in the economically challenged flatlands.

Richard is considered a well-meaning teenager, but he makes the tragic mistake of holding a lighter up to Sasha’s skirt while she is sleeping, assuming he will give her a quick scare. What he does not realize, however, is that this reckless act will leave Sasha with second and third degree burns on her body, and he will be charged with two hate crimes and face life imprisonment.

On the surface, it is easy to assume this incident was a hate crime perpetrated by an African American, which is the way in which it was conveyed by the media. This is due, in part, to Richard’s own words when he states that he is homophobic, sparking a national controversy.

However, in her book THE 57 BUS: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their Lives, Dashka Slater takes a different approach introducing the complexity of the characters and the situation, examining both Sasha’s and Richard’s lives prior to the crime taking place and sharing snippets relating to what made them the people they were at the time of the crime and today.

In addition, Slater explores the flaws in the criminal justice system that impacted the case, pointing to things like no lawyer being present in the room while Richard is interrogated, and the official charge which had Richard being tried as an adult. Slater also uses the opportunity to raise awareness for the violence inflicted upon the LGBTQ community, along with addressing race, sexuality and gender roles.

THE 57 BUS presents itself in a nonfiction format, with a narrative voice. Slater includes text messages, social media exchanges, letters and poetry in order for the reader to walk away fully understanding both of the teenager’s stories; the reader is left with empathy for both Sasha and Richard and their families.

However, while the book does not excuse Richard’s actions and clearly illustrates the reckless nature of his actions, Slater tries to examine the crime through the lens of adolescent ignorance rather than all-out criminal activity and she addresses tolerance and forgiveness. To this day, Richard remains incarcerated for the incident, while Sasha has recovered and is a senior in college.

1. The Whydah: A Pirate Ship Feared, Wrecked, and Found

Author: Martin W. Sandler

The exciting true story of the captaincy, wreck, and discovery of the Whydah the only pirate ship ever found and the incredible mysteries it revealed.   
The 1650s to the 1730s marked the golden age of piracy, when fearsome pirates like Blackbeard ruled the waves, seeking not only treasure but also large and fast ships to carry it. The Whydah was just such a ship, built to ply the Triangular Trade route, which it did until one of the greediest pirates of all, Black Sam Bellamy, commandeered it. Filling the ship to capacity with treasure, Bellamy hoped to retire with his bounty but in 1717 the ship sank in a storm off Cape Cod. For more than two hundred years, the wreck of the Whydah (and the riches that went down with it) eluded treasure seekers, until the ship was finally found in 1984 by marine archaeologists. The artifacts brought up from the ocean floor are priceless, both in value and in the picture they reveal of life in that much-mythologized era, changing much of what we know about pirates

**Scott o’Dell Award for Historical Fiction 2018**

Title: [Beyond the Bright Sea](https://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1101994851/scottodell-20)

Author: Lauren Wolk.

 This is the moving story of an orphan, determined to know her own history, who discovers the true meaning of family. As an infant, twelve-year-old Crow was found alone in a beached skiff by Osh, her beloved father figure, and she loves her life with him on their wild island. The locals, however, mostly shun her, believing that she came from Penikese Island, which housed a now-shuttered leprosy hospital. It’s a folklore-touched tale involving orphans and buried treasure and villainy and the ocean, but it’s also a wisely observed account of a girl’s reconnection to her own hidden past and her growing understanding of both her past and present. Wolk weaves a captivating story that’s tinged with mystery right from the start, in writing that’s polished and lovely while remaining highly accessible to young readers.