Respect the Mic, edited by Hanif Abdurraqib, Franny Choi, Peter Kahn, & Dan Sullivan
For Chicago’s Oak Park and River Forest High School’s Spoken Word Club, there is one phrase that reigns supreme: Respect the Mic. It’s been the club’s call to arms since its inception in 1999. This vivid new collection of poetry and prose illuminates just that, uplifting the incredible legacy this community has cultivated.

Feathered Serpent, Dark Heart of Sky by David Bowles
These stories trace the history of the world from its beginnings in the dreams of the dual god Ometeotl, to the arrival of the conquistadors in Mexico and the fall of Tenochtitlan. We also learn about the Creator Twins, Feathered Serpent, and Dark Heart of Sky, as well as Aztec tales about the arrival of the strangers from across the sea- the strangers who seek to upend the rule of Motecuhzoma and destroy these very stories.

Black Birds in the Sky by Brandy Colbert *
In the early morning of June 1, 1921, a white mob marched across the train tracks in Tulsa and into a thriving, affluent Black neighborhood known as Black Wall Street. They brought with them firearms, gasoline, and explosives, and razed thirty-five square blocks to the ground and left hundreds dead. The Tulsa Race Massacre is one of the most devastating acts of racial violence in history, so why are the events unknown to many today?

Wild Tongues Can’t Be Tamed, edited by Saraciea J. Fennell
Bestselling authors as well as up-and-coming voices interrogate the different myths and stereotypes about the Latinx diaspora. These original pieces delve into everything from ghost stories and superheroes, to travels around the world, to addiction and grief, to identity and anti-Blackness, to finding love and speaking your truth.

Rise Up! by Crystal M. Fleming *
This is a resource for understanding racial injustice and its continued impact today, addressing questions like: Why are white supremacists still openly marching in America? And why are undocumented children separated from their families and housed in cages?

Lighter Than My Shadow by Katie Green ^^
Like most kids, Katie was a picky eater. She’d sit at the table in silent protest and hide uneaten toast in her bedroom. This is a story of struggle and recovery, a trip into the black heart of a taboo illness, and an inspiration to anybody who believes in the human power to endure towards happiness.

Ordinary Hazards by Nikki Grimes *
Growing up with a mother with paranoid schizophrenia and a mostly absent father, Nikki Grimes found herself terrorized by babysitters, shunted from foster family to foster family, and preyed upon by those she trusted. At the age of six, she poured her pain onto a piece of paper- and discovered the magic and impact of writing...

A Face for Picasso by Ariel Henley *
At only eight months old, Ariel and her identical twin sister Zan were diagnosed with Crouzon syndrome – a condition where the bones in the head fuse prematurely. Growing up, they endured numerous appearance-altering procedures; the physical aspect was painful, but it was nothing compared to the emotional toll of navigating life with a facial disfigurement. Through this memoir, Ariel explores beauty, identity, and sisterly strength.

Blank Canvas by Akiko Higashimura ^# Akiko has big goals to become a popular mangaka before she even graduates high school, but she needs to get better at drawing. She signs up for an art class, thinking all her problems will soon be solved- but she’s in for a surprise. Her new instructor is a taskmaster who doesn’t care about manga, but maybe this unconventional teacher is just what she needs to realize her dreams!

^ = Graphic Novel or Manga | * = Available on Hoopla and/or Libby | # = Series
TEEN NONFICTION

*(Don’t) Call Me Crazy, edited by Kelly Jensen*
In order to understand mental health, we need to talk openly about it. *(Don’t) Call Me Crazy* is a conversation starter and guide to better understanding how our mental health affects us every day. Thirty-three contributors offer essays, lists, comics, and illustrations that explore their personal experiences with mental illness, how we do (and do not) talk about mental health, and help for better understanding how everyone’s brain is wired differently.

*All Boys Aren’t Blue* by George M. Johnson
Through essays, journalist and LGBTQIA+ activist George M. Johnson explores his childhood, adolescence, and college years. From the memories of getting his teeth kicked out by bullies at age five, to flea marketing with his loving grandmother, to his first sexual relationships, this memoir weaves together the trials and triumphs faced by Black queer boys.

*Queer Ducks (and Other Animals)* by Eliot Schrefer
A quiet revolution has been underway in recent years, with study after study revealing substantial same-sex sexual behavior in animals. Join Eliot Schrefer on an exploration of queer behavior in the animal world- from albatrosses to bonobos to doodlebugs- to show it is as diverse and as natural as it is in our own species.

*Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults*, adapted by Monique Gray Smith
Adapted from Robin Wall Kimmerer’s best-selling book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, this edition reinforces how wider ecological understanding stems from listening to the earth’s oldest teachers (the plants around us) and brings Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the lessons of plant life to a new generation.

*Beyond the Gender Binary* by Alok Vaid-Menon
Spoken word poet Alok Vaid-Menon challenges the world to see gender not in black and white, but in full color. Taking from their own experiences as a gender-nonconforming artist, they show us that gender is a malleable and creative form of expression- the only limit is your imagination.

*Disability Visibility*, edited by Alice Wong
These seventeen eye-opening essays, all written by disabled people, offer keen insight into the complex and rich disability experience, examining life’s ableism and inequality, its challenges and losses, and celebrating its wisdom, passion, and joy.

*Dragon Hoops* by Gene Luen Yang
Gene understands stories, but Gene doesn’t get sports. He lost interest in basketball long ago, but at the high school where he teaches, it’s all anyone can talk about. The men’s team, the Dragons, is having a great season and each victory brings them closer to their goal: the California State Championships. Once Gene gets to know the players, he realizes that their story is just as thrilling, and he has to follow this epic to its end.

*From a Whisper to a Rallying Cry* by Paula Yoo
America 1982: Japanese car companies are on the rise and believed to be putting U.S. autoworkers out of their jobs; anti-Asian American sentiment simmers, especially in Detroit. A bar fight turns fatal, leaving Chinese American man Vincent Chin, beaten to death at the hands of two white men. When the men pled guilty to manslaughter and received only a $3,000 fine and three years’ probation, the lenient sentence sparked outrage; the protests that followed led to a federal civil rights trial and motivated the Asian American movement.

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