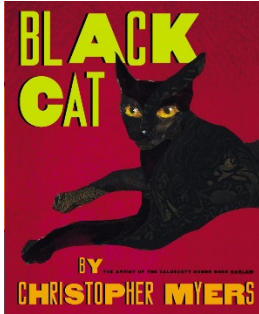


The Children's Literature Association Proudly Announces the 2020 Phoenix Picture Book Award Recipient:

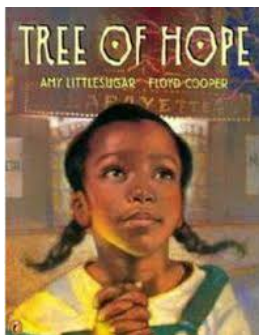


***Black Cat* by Christopher Myers**

New York: Scholastic, 1999

A rough, gritty beauty permeates Myers's celebration of the city and the cat that confidently roams its streets. Nothing in this book fits seamlessly together: not the mixture of photographs, collage, ink, and gouache that create the cityscapes nor the combination of jarring sounds and images interspersed with a rhythmic refrain in the description of the cat's adventures. Nevertheless, this lack of complete harmony conveys a raw beauty and deep feelings, particularly through the independence of both the cat and the city. The words and photographs highlight both the beauties and the haunting tensions. The city is both. Sometimes it is both at once, as in the beautiful silhouette of the black cat "slam-dunking" itself through a basketball hoop with no net. The story operates on a metaphoric as well as a literal level. The book is innovative and edgy, symbolic and provocative, its connotations lingering in the mind well after the story is over.

2019 Phoenix Picture Book Honor Book:



***Tree of Hope* by Amy LittleSugar and Floyd Cooper**

New York: Philomel, 1999

Individually strong and moving, LittleSugar's narrative voice and Cooper's oilwash paintings unite to deliver a powerful story of hard-won dreams, family, and community. The story's comparisons between "the old days, the golden days" of the Harlem Renaissance and the present day in 1930s Harlem create compelling scenes about the effects of the Great Depression on the community and impact of Orson Welles's, with its all-black cast. But the narrative shines brightest when conveying the interactions among Florrie's family. Similarly, while Cooper's softened color palette and slightly hazy texture convey the historical nature of the story and provide the effects of stage lighting on each page, his portraits of Florrie and her parents create the strongest impressions. Told from young Florrie's point of view, the story really is about her father who is able to renew his acting dreams when the Lafayette Theatre in Harlem opens back up, and her mother's eventual embrace of this non-utilitarian career. Based on true events, we learn about Orson Welles's Caribbean version of in Harlem. The *Tree of Hope* is only one image of this richly told and illustrated book showing urban poverty, colorful theatre stages, and a single rose: the gift from mother to father. It tells a new story of African-American vitality, hope, and artistry in the midst of a bleak chapter in American history.