

Novels in Verse

The following list includes young adult novels written in verse. These books vary in the difficulty of both the text and the content. Not all books are appropriate for all readers. (Annotations from Library of Congress).

Carvell, Marlene. ***Sweetgrass Basket***. In alternating passages, two Mohawk sisters describe their lives at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, established in 1879 to educate Native Americans, as they try to assimilate into white culture and one of them is falsely accused of stealing.

Creech, Sharon. ***Love that Dog***. A young student, who comes to love poetry through a personal understanding of what different famous poems mean to him, surprises himself by writing his own inspired poem.

Frost, Helen. ***The Braid***. Two Scottish sisters relate their experiences after their family is forcibly evicted from the island of Barra and separated, with one sister accompanying their parents to Cape Breton, Canada, and the other staying behind with their grandmother.

Frost, Helen. ***Keesha's House***. Seven teens facing such problems as pregnancy, closeted homosexuality, and abuse each describe in poetic forms what caused them to leave home and where they found home again.

Grimes, Nikki. ***Dark Sons***. Alternating poems compare and contrast the conflicted feelings of Ishmael, son of the Biblical patriarch Abraham, and Sam, a teenager in New York City, as they try to come to terms with being abandoned by their fathers and with the love they feel for their younger stepbrothers.

Hesse, Karen. ***Out of the Dust***. In a series of poems, fifteen-year-old Billie Jo relates the hardships of living on her family's wheat farm in Oklahoma during the dust bowl years of the Depression.

Hesse, Karen. ***Witness***. A series of poems express the views of various people in a small Vermont town, including a young black girl and a young Jewish girl, during the early 1920s when the Ku Klux Klan is trying to infiltrate the town.

Johnson, Angela. ***First Part Last***. Bobby's carefree teenage life changes forever when he becomes a father and must care for his adored baby daughter.

Koertge, Ron. ***Boy Girl Boy***. Three troubled high school seniors, who plan to run away together from Illinois to California after graduation, try to figure out who they are and who they want to be.

Koertge, Ron. ***Shakespeare Bats Cleanup***. When a fourteen-year-old baseball player catches mononucleosis, he discovers that keeping a journal and experimenting with poetry not only helps fill the time, it also helps him deal with life, love, and loss.

Koertge, Ron. ***The Brimstone Journals***. In a series of short interconnected poems, students at a high school nicknamed Brimstone reveal the violence existing and growing in their lives.

Levithan, David. ***The Realm of Possibility***. A variety of students at the same high school describe their ideas, experiences, and relationships in a series of interconnected free verse stories.

McCormick, Patricia. ***Sold***. When she is tricked by her stepfather and sold into prostitution, thirteen-year-old Lakshmi becomes submerged in a nightmare where her only comfort is the friendship she forms with the other girls, which helps her survive and eventually escape.

Roy, Jennifer. ***Yellow Star***. From 1939, when Sylvia is four and a half years old, to 1945 when she has just turned ten, a Jewish girl and her family struggle to survive in Poland's Lodz ghetto during the Nazi occupation.

Rylant, Cynthia. ***God Went to Beauty School***. A novel in poems that reveal God's discovery of the wonders and pains in the world He has created.

Sones, Sonya. ***Stop Pretending***. A younger sister has a difficult time adjusting to life after her older sister has a mental breakdown.

Sones, Sonya. ***What My Mother Doesn't Know***. Sophie describes her relationships with a series of boys as she searches for Mr. Right.

Wolff, Virginia Euwer. ***Make Lemonade***. In order to earn money for college, fourteen-year-old LaVaughn babysits for a teenage mother.

Woodson, Jacqueline. ***Locomotion***. In a series of poems, eleven-year-old Lonnie writes about his life, after the death of his parents, separated from his younger sister, living in a foster home, and finding his poetic voice at school.

List compiled by Diane Stevens

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