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Contact: Christine Alfano
Administrator – 612-925-1284



2012 MARION VANNETT RIDGWAY AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED **A trio of picture book creators are recognized for debut work excellence**

The Winners of the 2012 Marion Vannett Ridgway Award:

- **First Prize: Illustrator Christopher Silas Neal for *Over and Under the Snow*, (Chronicle Books, 2011).** Illustrations as crisp and clean as the snowy world they depict invite readers along on a father/daughter ski trip through the winter woods. Beautifully designed spreads explore various animals' winter habitats, allowing glimpses into voles' tunnels, a bear's den, a queen bee's hiding place, among others. The story's heart-warming ending suggests the human version of hibernation—a cutaway illustration pictures the girl asleep in bright red pajamas, tucked inside cozy blankets. Neal's compelling, informative artwork brings the book's cold-weather landscape to life.
- **Honor Awards: Author Annika Dunklee for *My Name Is Elizabeth*, (Kids Can Press, 2011).** Dunklee's pitch-perfect story gives voice to an unforgettable and spunky heroine—young Elizabeth (not Lizzy, not Betsy, not Beth!) who announces to the world her adamant wish to be called by her *full* first name. The simple and punchy text proves that Dunklee knows her way around a picture book manuscript, plus it provides a humorous springboard for superbly funny illustrations.
Author/Illustrator Amy Martin for *Symphony City* (McSweeney's McMullens, 2011). In a picture book that revels in the physicality of "bookness"—hefty paper, huge size, embossed cover and a dust jacket that unfolds into a poster—Amy Martin unfolds a quiet story of a girl who gets lost in a city, yet slowly opens her eyes and ears to its wonders, as shapes and colors and a glorious array of city sounds evolve into a symphony surrounding and inspiring her, finally guiding her home. Rich metaphors and sumptuous artwork make Martin's first book sing.

Each year the **Marion Vannett Ridgway Award** is given in honor of outstanding work by first time children's book illustrators or authors. Established in 1993, this unique award celebrates the memory of the artist's representative Marion Vannett Ridgway, who felt a special devotion to talented beginners. The Ridgway award is given with the spirit of encouragement for those making their way into the world of children's book publishing.

Over twenty children's book publishers participated in this year's contest, and the judging panel included award-winning children's book authors and illustrators Lauren Stringer, Antoinette Portis and Jim Averbeck as well as the 2011 Marion Vannett Ridgway Honor Award winner Darren Farrell. For more information about the award, visit the website: www.marionvannettridgwayaward.com