

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 1, 2014  
Minneapolis, MN



## 2014 RIDGWAY AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Creators of four picture books are recognized for debut work excellence

Each year the Ridgway Award celebrates outstanding work by first-time children's book illustrators or authors. Established in 1993, this unique award honors the memory of the artist's representative Marion Vannett Ridgway, who showed a devotion to talented newcomers. The Ridgway Award is given with the spirit of encouragement for those just entering the world of publishing and applauds the very best debut picture book illustration and text.

### The Winners of the 2014 Marion Vannett Ridgway Award

#### **First Prize: Author Jessica Young for *My Blue Is Happy* (Candlewick Press, 2013).**

In this ode to color and each person's unique perspective of its meaning, a young girl counters a crayon-boxful of descriptions—"Dad says brown is ordinary/Like a plain paper bag."—with lyrical and fresh rejoinders: "But my brown is special/Like chocolate syrup...And a piece of earth that's just for me." She sees the world's hues slightly differently, and her calm insistence on her own point of view delivers a striking, sweet, and eye-opening message. Catia Chien's illustrations express the opposing color connotations in buoyant, kid-friendly ways.

#### **Honor Awards:**

**Author Daniel Beaty for *Knock Knock: My Dad's Dream for Me* (Little, Brown, 2013).** Based on a tour-de-force spoken word piece, Beaty's text for *Knock Knock* examines the deeply personal yet socially relevant issue of children's lives absent the presence of their fathers. The story hinges on paired letters, one from a young boy to his missing Dad, and the other, a longed-for and heartfelt reply, which emphasizes the father/son bond and transforms the phrase "knock knock" from a playful ritual to a powerful social imperative. Bryan Collier's collage art adds rich warmth and meaning to each page.

**Author and Illustrator Brianne Farley for *Ike's Incredible Ink* (Candlewick Press, 2013).** This fantasy about the ups and downs of the creative process is made from some incredible ink of its own: an original mixture of edgy, quirky, and sincere, featuring an odd inkblot character that fits the story perfectly. Farley's impressive text has a way of finding ingenious and precise words, like *floating*, *velvety*, and *lugged*, to draw in young readers, while her delightful illustrations combine controlled ink-work

with outta-control, emotionally expressive splotches and blobs.

**Author H. Joseph Hopkins for *The Tree Lady* (Beach Lane Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2013).** With a fascinating subject as a springboard, Hopkins tells the story of horticulturist Kate Sessions in a bounding way, linking each “chapter” of her life with a rhythmic variation on the words “she did” – making the phrase a connecting point as well as a momentum builder. Copiously researched, Hopkins’ artful text describes Sessions’ mission to create and sustain San Diego’s famous Balboa Park; Importantly, he refrains from telling *too* much, allowing plenty of room for Jill McElmurry’s lush, informative illustrations.

Over twenty United States children’s book publishers participated in this year’s contest, and more than 60 debut works, all published in 2013, were considered. The judging panel included award-winning children’s book authors and illustrators Lauren Stringer, Jim Averbeck, and Susan Marie Swanson, as well as 2013 Ridgway Honor Award winner Christian Robinson.

For more information, visit the Ridgway Award website:

[www.marionvannettridgwayaward.com](http://www.marionvannettridgwayaward.com)

Contact: Christine Alfano Administrator – 612-925-1284

###