



# The Booklist Project



Focus: Culturally- Responsive Author Study  
Booklist

Yangsook Choi

Developed by: Sylvia Stipich

Fall, 2012

## *Author Study Book List*

### *Korean-American Author, Yangsook Choi*



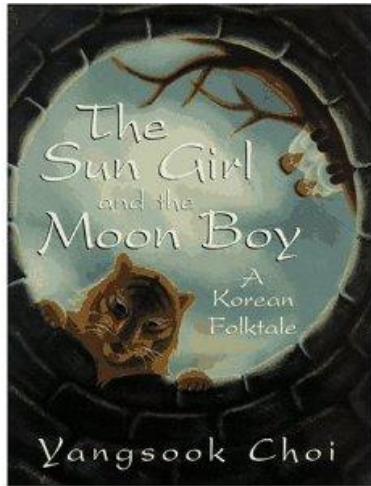
Yangsook Choi grew up in Korea and arrived in the USA when she was twenty four to study art. She went through several career changes, which included working as a flight attendant and studying interior design. However, she always knew she "would use [her] profession as a channel to somehow connect to children...[because her] heart was hardened by the injustices towards children by the rules made by self centered grown ups."<sup>i</sup> She has written and illustrated many books for children, all of which have a multicultural theme running throughout.

Author website: <http://www.yangsookchoi.com/>

Sylvia Stipich

Rhode Island College

Book List for 2nd to 6th graders



Choi, Y. (1997). *The Sun Girl and the Moon Boy: A Korean Folktale* (1st ed.). New York: Knopf Books For Young Readers.

**Formats:** Hardcover

**ISBN-10:** 067988386X

**ISBN-13:** 978-0679883869

**Synopsis:** The author's retelling of a Korean fairy tale similar in some ways to the Little Red Riding Hood story. Long ago, the story tells, there was only darkness. People used lamps to see and avoid the tigers that were common in those days. One day a mother went to market to buy some food, but was eaten by a tiger on her way back. The tiger then put on her clothes and tried to trick the children into believing he was their mother. Eventually the tiger breaks in and chases the children, but their mother saves them by throwing down a rope from Heaven. The boy turns into the moon, while the girl becomes the sun. Now the mother rests in peace because

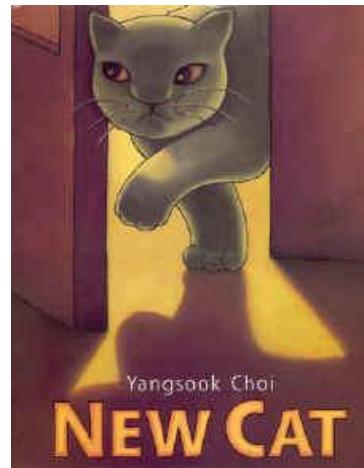
all people now have light to help them see.

**WIDA levels:** A higher level

**Expanding** learner will be able to understand, especially with the help of the gorgeous illustrations. If the learner is already familiar with this story, they may understand the narrative quite easily without missing the finer points.

**Age Level:** 6 and up

**Lexile Level:** 540L



Choi, Y. (1999). *New Cat* (1st ed.). New York: Farrar, Straus And Giroux (Byr).

**Formats:** Hardcover

**ISBN-10:** 0374355126

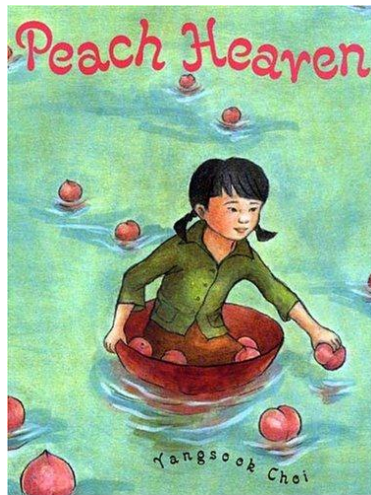
**ISBN-13:** 978-0374355128

**Synopsis:** A tofu factory owner gets a cat to help keep his business free of mice. However, one tricky mouse outwits the new cat by retreating to the production floor, which the cat cannot reach. The mouse nibbles on some

wires, causing an electrical fire that the cat puts out by knocking over a cart of watery tofu. A beautifully illustrated book, portraying the eternal struggle between cat and mouse.

**WIDA levels:** This book would entertain a **Developing** level learner, who could understand the ideas in the book through the pictures, but the language is better tailored to an **Expanding** level learner.

**Age Level:** 5- 8



Choi, Y. (2005). *Peach Heaven* (1st ed.). New York: Farrar, Straus And Giroux (Byr).

**Formats:** Hardcover

**ISBN-10:** 0374357617

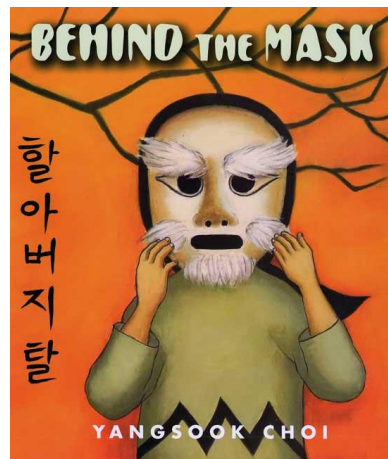
**ISBN-13:** 978-0374357610

**Synopsis:** A young girl growing up in the 1970s in Korea loves peaches. During this time, Korea's economy was one of the worst in the world, making

peaches expensive and luxurious food. Nonetheless, she dreams of peaches all the time. One day, during monsoon season, it begins to rain peaches. Everyone collects them, and then they understand the mystery of the raining peaches; the peaches had all come from nearby farmer's orchards! Yangsook comes up with an idea to help these farmers, who otherwise would have been devastated.

**WIDA levels:** Beautifully illustrated, the pictures in this book do most of the talking. Text is minimal. Theme of altruism and helping others—a good match for a **Developing** or **Expanding** learner.

**Age Level:** 6 and up



Choi, Y. (2006). *Behind the Mask* (First Edition ed.). New York: Farrar, Straus And Giroux (Byr).

**Formats:** Hardcover

**ISBN-10:** 0374305226

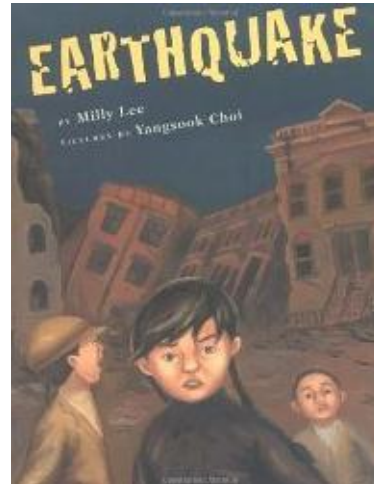
**ISBN-13:** 978-0374305222

**Synopsis:** A great book for multicultural kids about a Korean-American boy. We understand from various clues in the book that the main character, Kimin, grew up in the USA, but through his family is still strongly connected to Korean culture even if he doesn't speak the language well. Not knowing what to be for Halloween one year, Kimin follows his mother's suggestion to put on his grandfather's mask. Kimin's grandfather was a mask dancer, which was highly applauded in Korea, but which scared Kimin as a young boy. The other children at first laugh at Kimin's costume idea, but eventually love it and help him discover more about his family than even Kimin's mother ever knew about.

**WIDA levels: Expanding.** Has sophisticated themes about family and culture that younger or less advanced ELLs would have difficulty understanding and expressing.

**Lexile Level: 610**

**Age Level:** 6 and up



Lee, M. (2006). *Earthquake*. New York: Farrar, Straus And Giroux (Byr).

**Formats:** Hardcover

**ISBN-10:** 0374419469

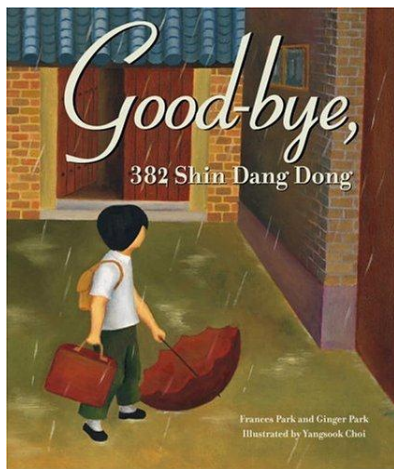
**ISBN-13:** 978-0374419462

**Synopsis:** Written by Milly Lee and illustrated by Yangsook Choi, this story is about the 1906 earthquake, as seen by immigrants in San Francisco's Chinatown.

**WIDA levels:** The book has minimal text, mostly describing which household items are being packed. Illustrations assist learners to comprehend some unknown vocabulary and make it possible for a **high Developing** or **Expanding** level learner to understand. Some place names in San Francisco are mentioned, so understanding of capitalization conventions or familiarity with the city would greatly improve understanding. Author's note at end is historically interesting and relevant to equity issues ELLs may experience—women and immigrants were not counted

as those among the dead.

**Age Level:** 6 and up



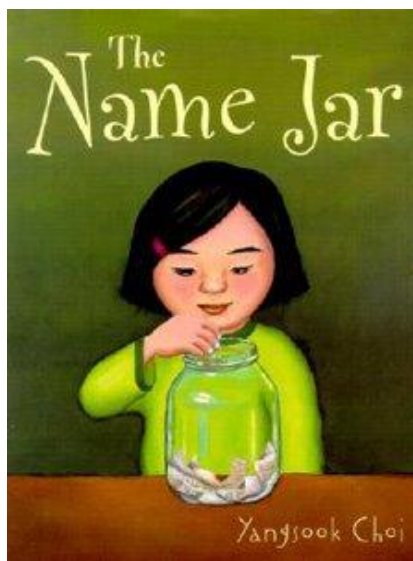
Park, F. (2002). *Good-Bye, 382 Shin Dang Dong* (Library Binding ed.). Washington, DC: National Geographic Children's Books.  
**Formats:** Hardcover  
**ISBN-10:** 0792279859

**Synopsis:** A tale of an older grade school girl, Jangmi, whose parents are moving with her from Korea to Brighton, Massachusetts. The local setting may look familiar to students here, but to Jangmi everything looks strange and different from Korea. In the end, she makes a new friend and decides maybe her new home isn't so bad after all.

**WIDA levels:** Expanding or Bridging

**Lexile:** 620L

**Age Level:** 4 and up



Choi, Yangsook. *The Name Jar*. (2003). New York, New York: Dragonfly Books.

**Formats:** Hardcover

**ISBN-10:** 0440417996

**ISBN-13:** 978-0440417996

**Synopsis:** UneHei recently immigrated to the USA from Korea. On her way to the first day of school, she introduces herself to students, and some of them make fun of her different and hard to pronounce name. Her classmates begin a name jar for her, with suggestions for her new American name, but the day that she is to choose her new name, the jar vanishes. Later she discovers that her friend took the jar so she could keep her Korean name.

**WIDA:** While his book features some longer blocks of text, complex language (tag questions, past perfect) and richer vocabular (words like enthusiastic, insisted, peculiar, glum), the illustrations and theme make it accessible for high

**Developing** students.

**Lexile level: AD290L**

**Age Level:** 4 and up



Wong, J. S. (2000). *This Next New Year* (1st ed ed.). New York: Farrar, Straus And Giroux (Byr).

**Formats:** Hardcover

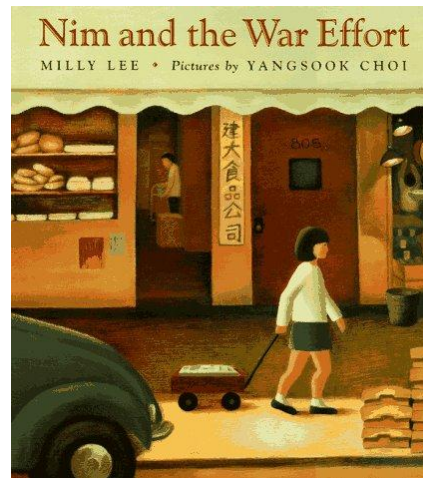
**ISBN-10:** 0374355037

**ISBN-13:** 978-0374355036

**Synopsis:** A half Korean, half Chinese child recounts how and when he and his friends of various ethnicities celebrate the New Year. Students from multicultural families or in multicultural classrooms will relate personally to the various holidays and celebrations.

**WIDA:** Illustrated by Choi and written by Janet Wong. **Beginning** learners will find the sentence structure and storyline repetitive enough to follow, but with enough variety to maintain interest.

**Age Level:** 4 and up



Lee, Milly, *Nim and the War Effort*. (2002). New York, New York: Square Fish.

**Formats:** Hardcover

**ISBN-10:** 0374455066

**ISBN-13:** 978-0374455064

**Synopsis:** Set in World War 2 era San Francisco, Nim is a Chinese American girl living in Chinatown. Her school is having a newspaper gathering contest that she is determined to win. Conflict between Nim and the class bully helps Nim find an unexpected supply of newspapers. She wins the contest and the respect of her family and classmates.

**WIDA:** Page long unbroken chunks of texts with some pictorial support make this more appropriate for high **Expanding** or **Bridging** ELLs. Total book length is about 40 pages.

**Lexile Level:** AD510L

*All books are English only, though many have Korean in the pictures.*

*All books are shown as available-no audio book versions are listed.  
Some books' Lexile levels had been measured and shared online at [www.lexile.com/fab](http://www.lexile.com/fab).*

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<sup>1</sup> (n.d.). *Multicultural Literature*. Retrieved October 28, 2012, from <http://lindalaib.tripod.com/id26.html>

## **Extension Activities:**

### **All Books:**

- 1) TeachingBooks.net:  
<http://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?aid=3560&a=1>

### **Good-bye, 382 Shin Dang Dong:**

- 1) Vocabulary, spelling, sequencing and variety of activities:  
<http://www.myteacherpages.com/webpages/kpitts/resources.cfm?subpage=82197>

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### **The Name Jar:**

- 1) The Origin of Names; Discussion questions for pre- and post-reading:  
<http://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/SocialJustice/Issues/Antiracism/TheOriginOfNames.pdf>
- 2) Teaching Philosophy with the Name Jar  
[http://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/wiki/The\\_Name\\_Jar](http://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/wiki/The_Name_Jar)
- 3) Lesson Plan by Ontario based teacher  
[http://www.developingaglobalperspective.ca/wp-content/assets/lessonplans/gr2/Whats\\_Your\\_Name.pdf](http://www.developingaglobalperspective.ca/wp-content/assets/lessonplans/gr2/Whats_Your_Name.pdf)



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## The Booklist Project

A Project of the  
M.Ed. In TESL Program,



Feinstein School of Education and Human Development  
Rhode Island College

For Further Information, Contact:  
Nancy Cloud, Ed.D., Director

[ncloud@ric.edu](mailto:ncloud@ric.edu)

Rhode Island College  
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue  
Providence, RI 02908