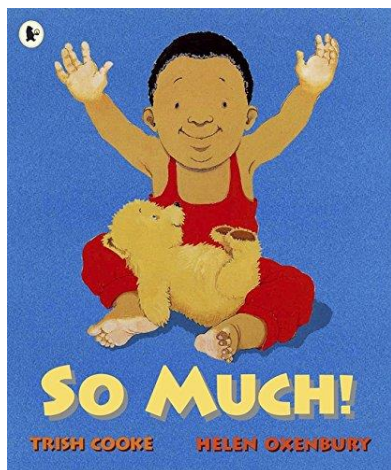


Valentine's Day list

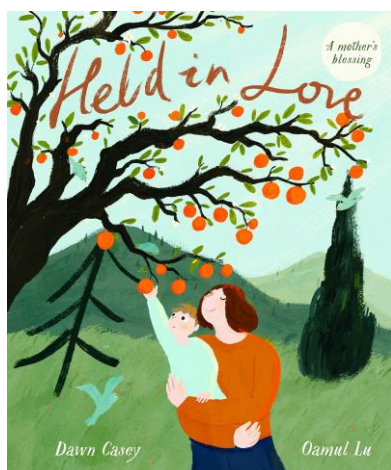
Books perfect to celebrate the bonds of love and friendship in their most varied and uplifting forms.



***So Much* by Trish Cooke and Helen Oxenbury
Walker 9781406306651**

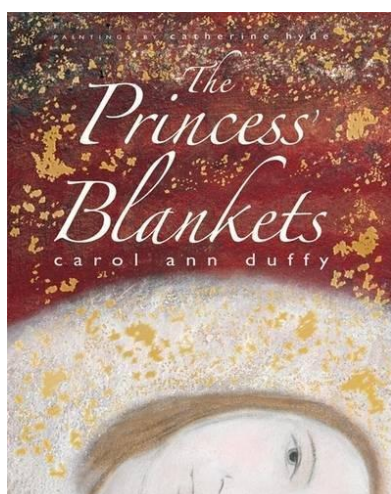
An affectionate picture book in which aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents come to the baby's house for a surprise birthday party for his Dad. They all love the baby SO MUCH that he falls asleep, exhausted from all the attention. A fine repetitive text replete with the cadence of Caribbean speech is brilliantly illustrated by Helen Oxenbury, who captures the togetherness of this extended family with warmth and humour. A 25th anniversary edition will be published in September 2019.

A CLPE core book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/so-much>



***Held in Love* by Dawn Casey and Oamul Lu
Lincoln Children's Books 9781786030672**

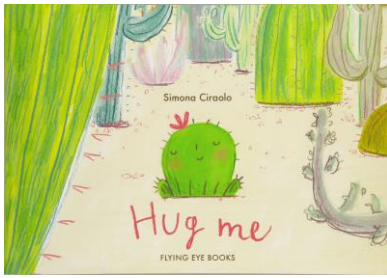
As a baby nestles in a mother's arms, she wishes that her child will experience the breadth of possibilities that life has to offer. Their place in the bigger scheme of things is beautifully expressed in the patterned and poetic text accompanying the pictures, which are composed using an earthy palette and take us from the wider universe to a home in a village where we see the loving bond between mother and child.



***The Princess' Blankets* by Carol Ann Duffy and Catherine Hyde
Templar 9781848771611**

A princess can never be warm and one day a stranger 'with hard, grey eyes like polished stones' arrives at the palace declaring that he can cure her malady. However, his solutions threaten the ocean, the forest, the mountain and the very earth itself and people's way of life along with it. It is only when the princess finds true love with a kind and gentle musician that her heart and body can be unfrozen and warm tears flow.

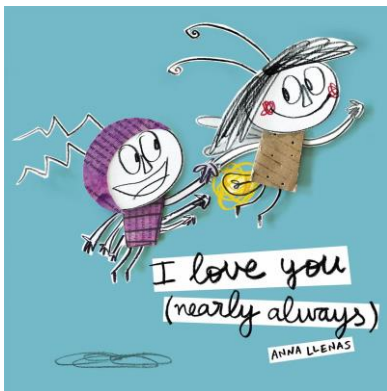
A CLPE core book and Power of Reading
<https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/princess-blankets>



***Hug Me* by Simona Ciruolo**
Flying Eye 9781911171720

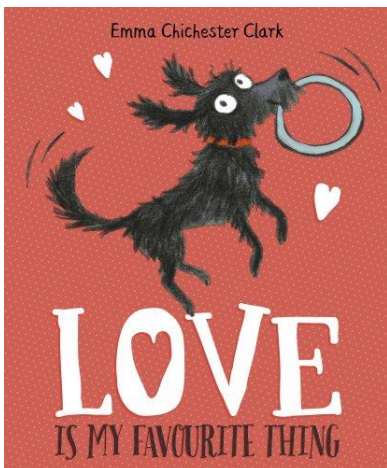
It's hard to give and receive physical affection when you have a prickly exterior. Felipe is a young cactus who only wants friendship and loving hugs but his outside appearance is a constant barrier, as is the high and mighty attitude of his family. He learns to enjoy his own company, delightfully depicted with him sitting in an armchair frowning over a Sudoku puzzle surrounded by takeaways and technology. Then one day Felipe hears a wail from outside his wall which leads to a meeting with the perfect companion.

A CLPE core book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/hug-me>



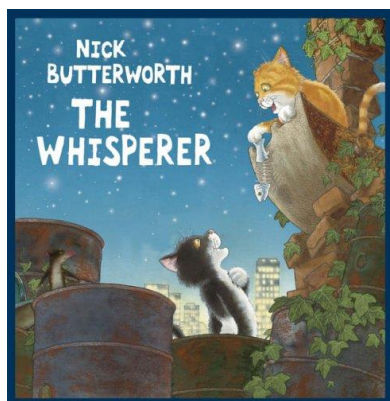
***I love you (nearly always)* by Anna Llenas**
Templar 9781783707973

Roly is a woodlouse and Rita is a firefly. They have very different temperaments and interests but this is what makes their friendship work as they give each other space to be themselves. Collage illustrations incorporating torn paper reveal the Spanish origins of this amusing picture book.



***Love is My Favourite Thing* by Emma Chichester Clark**
Red Fox 9781782951476

Life is seen here from the viewpoint of Plum, whose real-life adventures Emma Chichester Clark has chronicled in a popular blog <http://emmachichesterclark.blogspot.com/>. In this first picture book for children, the endearing and mischievous pooch tells us about all the things she loves including wind, water and sticks, declaring that love itself is the thing she loves most. What matters most to Plum is whether Emma will still love her, no matter what she gets up to. The illustrations present a beautifully observed and humorous picture of canine domestic life with human companions.



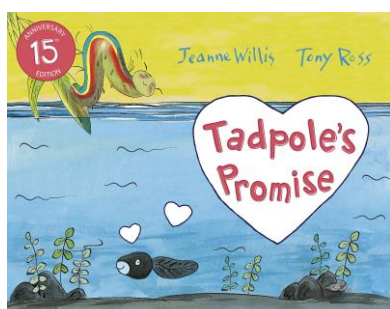
***The Whisperer* by Nick Butterworth**

HarperCollins 9780007120185

A story in the tradition of *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story* – Monty and Amber fall in love despite the fact that their families form rival gangs.

However, the differences are that the lovers are cats – one ginger and one black and white, and that this tale has a much happier ending, pointing out the futility of prejudice.

A CLPE core book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/whisperer>

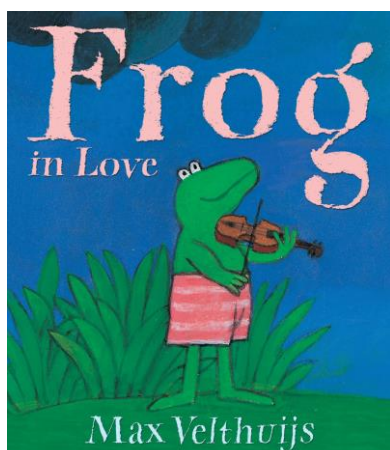


***Tadpole's Promise* by Jeanne Willis and Tony Ross**

Andersen Press 9781783445868

A caterpillar meets a tadpole 'where the willow meets the water' and they fall in love. She makes him promise that he will never change but, of course with each encounter, nature causes him to break his promise.

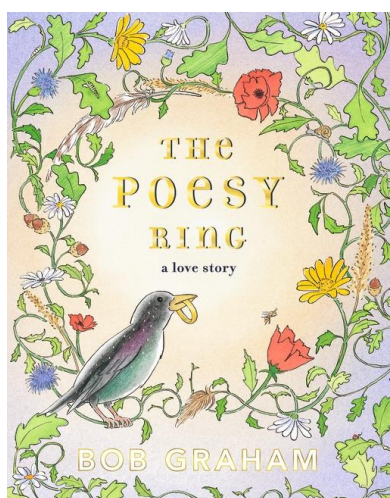
A CLPE core book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/tadpoles-promise>



***Frog in Love* by Max Velthuijs, translated by Anthea Bell**

Andersen Press 9781783441457

Frog feels funny but he just doesn't know why. After consulting his friends, Hare comes up with the answer – Frog must be in love! Frog realises that the object of his affections is Duck. Will Frog be able to overcome his bashfulness and declare his feelings to Duck and disprove his friends' conviction that it's not possible for a frog and a duck to fall in love?



***The Poesy Ring. A love story* by Bob Graham**

Walker 9781406378276

A gold ring, inscribed with the words 'Love never dies', travels from the west of Ireland in 1830 to New York in 1967 where it eventually finds a home with a couple who care for each other. Bob Graham depicts the people, animals and landscapes with which the ring comes into contact, as the seasons turn and the years pass, with an attention to detail which still gives scope for the reader's imagination.

