

# Booklist Reader

**Booklist**

Leading book discovery

December 2024

Book and audiobook recommendations for all ages

Top 10 Sci-Tech  
Books

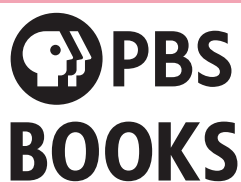
Holiday Romances

Picture-Book  
Read-alongs

Body-Positive  
Picture Books



Art by Dapo Adeola, from *Ten-Word Tiny Tales: To Inspire and Unsettle*, by Joseph Coelho





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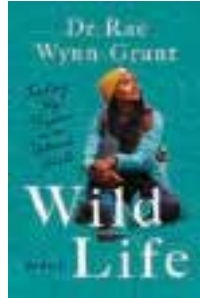
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December 2024  
Volume 4, Issue 4

Spotlight on  
Sci-Tech  
&  
Picture Books

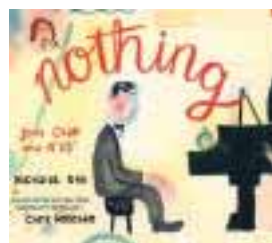
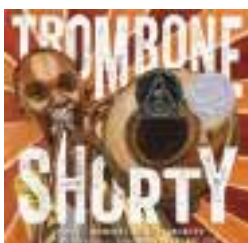
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### On the Cover

From *Ten-Word Tiny Tales of Love*, by Joseph Coelho and Friends, published by Candlewick. *Ten-Word Tiny Tales of Love* is reviewed in the December issue of *Booklist*. Illustration © 2024 by Jarvis. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Candlewick Press, on behalf of Walker Books, London.

## From the Publisher

As we enter the holiday season and close out 2024, we at *Booklist* and ALA wish you and your loved ones all the best. And I hope you're able to spend quality time in your library this month. (Along with my daughter, I've really been enjoying the children's programs our local library offers this time of year.) In this *Booklist Reader*, you'll find many excellent book, audiobook, picture-book, and other reading recommendations that will help usher in the new year. Many of us at ALA, me included, will be taking vacation time later this month. If you're looking forward to days off at home, or maybe a getaway, don't forget to include some books. I'm intrigued by selections in Picture Books about Families (p.23), Audio Revivals (p.18), and Time for Crafts & Hobbies (p.6). In addition to spending quality time with my family, I'm hoping to carve out personal time to read, write, consider all that happened this year, and plan for 2025. See you in January.

—George Kendall  
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Top 10

# Sci-Tech Books

These top sci-tech titles range in subject from the lives of Earth animals to the possibility of extraterrestrial life, and from the essential roles of oceans and a mighty river to the dangers of AI.

**Becoming Earth:** How Our Planet Came to Life. By Ferris Jabr. 2024. Random.

Jabr delivers an exquisitely detailed examination of life on Earth, looking back on multiple cycles of new life, mass extinctions, land formation, and ice ages; and to the present and how human activities are disrupting natural planetary cycles.

**Cry of the Wild:** Eight Animals under Siege. By Charles Foster. 2024. Doubleday.

In imaginative zoological fables about the lives of an orca, gannet, fox, otter, eel, mayfly, and others, Foster reveals just how besieged the natural world is.

**Deep Water:** The World in the Ocean. By James Bradley. 2024. HarperOne.

Bradley deftly explains the wondrous biodiversity and interconnectedness of oceanic life forms and elucidates grave threats to the viability of Earth's crucial oceans.

**Devil in the Stack:** Searching for the Soul of the New Machine. By Andrew Smith. 2024. Grove.

Curious about the true impact of social media, Smith conducted a deep dive into the culture of computer coders and the extent of high-tech's dangers and potential for good.

**The Great River:** The Making and Unmaking of the Mississippi. By Boyce Upholt. 2024. Norton.

The mighty Mississippi River and its tributaries sluice

140 cubic miles of water annually into the Gulf of Mexico; Upholt explains why this has been essential to the nation's ecology, cultures, and commerce.

**Kingdom of Play:** What Ball-Bouncing Octopuses, Belly-Flopping Monkeys, and Mud-Sliding Elephants Reveal about Life Itself. By David Toomey. 2024. Scribner.

With delight and awe, Toomey illuminates how and why animals play, taking an evolutionary perspective as he portrays octopuses, a piglet, wood thrushes, brown bears, and meerkats.

**The Secret Life of the Universe:** An Astrobiologist's Search for the Origins and Frontiers of Life. By Nathalie A. Cabrol. 2024. Scribner.

Cabrol considers where in our solar system and beyond extraterrestrial life forms might exist and what they might be like.

**Unmasking AI:** My Mission to Protect What Is Human in a World of Machines. By Joy Buolamwini. 2023. Random.

Buolamwini recounts her career and discovery of how AI encodes the social biases of its developers, too often perpetuating prejudice and worsening social inequalities.

**Why Animals Talk:** The New Science of Animal Communication. By Arik Kershenbaum. 2024. Penguin.

Kershenbaum presents a terrific overview of why and how nonhuman animals communicate, delving into the lives and "talk" of wolves, dolphins, parrots, gibbons, and chimpanzees.

**Wild Life:** Finding My Purpose in an Untamed World. By Rae Wynn-Grant. 2024. Zando.

Wildlife ecologist and National Geographic Society research fellow Wynn-Grant presents a fascinating memoir about the barriers Black women scientists face and her fieldwork studying the impact of human activity on animals, especially carnivores, in the Great Plains, Kenya, and Madagascar.

