

Hello, Friends!

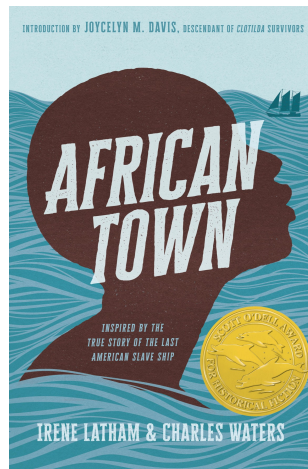


Happy day of hearts and flowers and chocolates!

I know, I know...many complain about the commercialization of this holiday.

But I'm of the mind that ANY celebration of love is a good thing. I savor slipping on my pink-hearted sweater, and I look forward all year long to the box of Godiva chocolates my sweetheart gifts me on Valentine's Day.

And who among us wouldn't love to receive a Valentine from the BOOK we're reading??! Here's one I wrote some years ago as part of my [ArtSpeak!](#) series. :)



A Few Quick Updates:

For my 2023 One Little Word, I selected SPACE. [Click here to see the quilt I created out of \(16\) blocks I stitched for words from each year since 2006.](#)

[AFRICAN TOWN](#) is now available in paperback! It's also been recognized by the following award committees:

YALSA 2023 [Best Fiction for Young Adults](#)

CBC National Council on Social Studies [2023 Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People](#)

...and just announced TODAY... it's been named the winner of the [Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction!](#)

Friends, I used to go to the library specifically in search of O'Dell Award winning books. And now that seal and my name are on the same cover! Charles and I are so honored and thrilled this will mean more people learning about the *Clotilda* shipmates and their story of resilience, triumph, and creativity.

Our gratitude to these committees and their work on behalf of children and literacy!

Charles and I will again be teaching (with special guest Carol Hinz!) on campus at Highlights Foundation Poetry for Kids: A World of Publishing Possibilities. Join us April 16-19! More information [here](#).

Many of you have been asking, and I am happy to share that the Cat Man of Aleppo is safe and rescuing pets in Syria and Turkey, post-earthquake. Learn more [here](#). Sending love and healing to all those affected.

Some LOVE Links

[Top Picture Books with LOVE in the title](#) (of course LOVE, AGNES: POSTCARDS FROM AN OCTOPUS is included! :)

Top Love quotes, via [Parade](#). (#1 featured below!)

Top Love on paper, via [Mental Floss](#). (I just requested #4 from my library!)

Top Love on film, via [Vanity Fair](#). (Their #1 is my #1.)

Top Love *from 2022* you can sing along with, via [Cosmopolitan](#). (A really fun list—I added several to my "Like" list on Spotify.)

Top Love vacation destinations, via [Travel and Leisure](#). (Paul and I are grateful to have experienced a handful of these and would add a personal fave: [Jekyll Island, GA](#).)

Top Love eats, via [Food, Wine & Love](#). (They had me at "dark chocolate.")

Here's that quote:

"I saw that you were perfect, and so I loved you. Then I saw that you were not perfect and I loved you even more." —*Angelita Lim*

...and that's all I have for you today! Thank you so much for reading this newsletter...I'm grateful for you. Now go forth and LOVE. The world is waiting for you.

**Love,
Irene**

P.S. My next poetry picture book *THE MUSEUM ON THE MOON: Curious Objects on the Lunar Surface*, illus. by Myriam Wares, will make its giant leap into readers' lives in August. More on this soon!

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