If you are looking for a family read over break or holiday gift ideas for your middle school student I have a few to recommend that have been published this year. Many of these titles have already been honored with awards and starred reviews, while others are contenders for the upcoming Printz, Newbery, and Coretta Scott King Awards. Happy Reading--Lynn

*Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson is a beautiful memoir, written in verse, of growing up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s. It won the 2014 National Book Award for Young People’s Literature.

*The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander is also written in verse. It is about fourteen-year-old twin basketball stars Josh and Jordan who wrestle with highs and lows on and off the court as their father ignores his declining health.

*Greenglass House* by Kate Milford involves role-playing by twelve-year-old Milo, whose Christmas looks ruined when five eccentric guests arrive at his parents’ inn on the first day of vacation.

*Ice Whale* is Jean Craighead George’s last novel. It is 1848 in the Alaskan north, where ten-year-old Toozak, a Yupik Eskimo, sees a whale being born. A shaman tells Toozak that he and his descendants must protect that whale as long as it lives. This story is told in alternating voices – Toozak’s and Siku, the whale’s.

*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin is the story of Rose, a young girl struggling with Asperger's syndrome. Her beloved dog goes missing during a storm, and Rose is forced to confront the limits of her comfort, even if it means leaving her routines in order to search for her lost pet.

*Sixties Trilogy #2: Revolution* by Deborah Wiles is the sequel to *Countdown*. Both are historical fiction titles featuring quotations and photographs from 1962-1964 dealing with the Cuban Missile Crisis (in the first novel) and the Civil Rights movement (in the second).

*Skink—No Surrender* by Carl Hiaasen combines a message of taking care of the world with suspense, humor, and Florida wildlife.

*Story of Owen: Dragon Slayer of Trondheim* by E.K. Johnston takes place on an alternate Earth where industrialization has caused many species of carbon-eating dragons to thrive. Owen, a slayer being trained by his famous father and aunt, and Siobahn, his bard, face a dragon infestation near their small town in Canada.

*Threatened* by Eliot Schrefer switches focus from bonobos, of his prior book *Endangered*, to chimpanzees in this equally intriguing, well researched, and gripping tale of survival.