

# Lesla Cline-Ransome

Born in Malden, Massachusetts, Lesla Cline-Ransome earned a BFA degree in Merchandising and Fashion Management at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York and worked as a fashion copywriter for Lord & Taylor and R. H. Macy in New York City.

Lesla developed an interest in the field of education and began working first as a substitute teacher in the New York City school system. Later she became a teacher for the Living for the Young Family through Education (LYFE) program, designed to offer on-site infant and toddler childcare for teenaged parents returning to high school to complete their education. While working for the program, Lesla earned an M.A. in Early childhood and Elementary Education from New York University.

Lesla began writing for children with her first book *Satchel Paige*, the biography of the Negro League pitcher, an ALA Notable Book and a Bank Street College “Best Children’s Book of the Year.” Other titles include *Quilt Alphabet*, a collection of alphabet poems, the companion book, *Quilt Counting*, *Major Taylor*, *Champion Cyclist*, two NAACP award nominees, *Young Pele: Soccer’s First Star* and *Before There Was Mozart: The Story of Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-George*, *Words Set Me Free: The Story of Young Frederick Douglass*, *Light in the Darkness: A Story about how Slaves Learned in Secret*, *Benny Goodman and Teddy Wilson: Taking the Stage as the First Black-and-White Jazz Band in History*, *Freedom’s School* (a companion book to *Light in the Darkness*), *Whale Trails: Before and Now* (illustrated by G. Brian Karas), *My Story, My Dance*, a 2016 Orbis Pictus Recommended Book and *Just a Lucky So and So: The Story of Louis Armstrong*. Her newest book, *Germs*, will be released in 2017.

Lesla visits schools, educational conferences and libraries throughout the country and hosts a writing segment on the award-winning educational series *KidLit TV*.

Many of Lesla’s books are in collaboration with her husband, award-winning children’s book illustrator James Ransome.

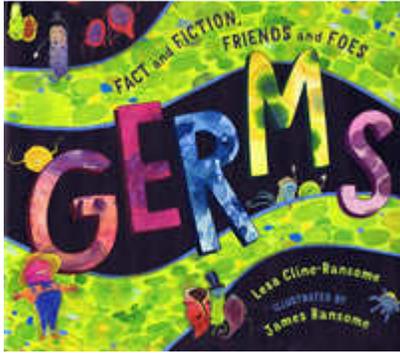
The mother of four children, and one St. Bernard, Lesla lives in Rhinebeck, New York. Visit her on Facebook, twitter and on her website, [www.lesaclineransome.com](http://www.lesaclineransome.com) and blog *Writerhood*.

Lesla was a member of Poughkeepsie AAUW and looks forward to reconnecting with members of the Cuisine Group! ■



# Lesa's Books

<http://www.lesaclineransome.com/books.html>

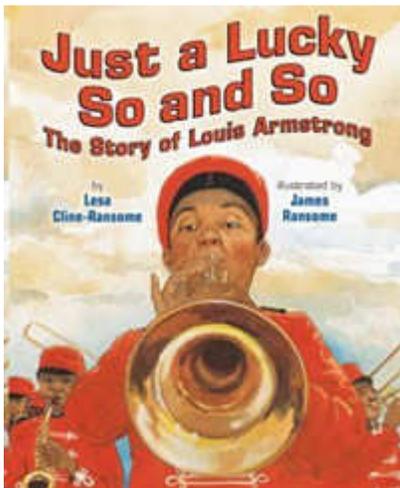


## **Germs: Fact and Fiction, Friends and Foes**

Illustrated by James Ransome  
(Holt/Ottaviano)

Come meet the good, the bad, and the ugly—yes, germs! There's so much to discover about germs. Did you know that germs make your stomach growl as they break down your food? Or that they can travel the world on anything from fleas and ticks to trains and buses?

Told from the perspective of Sam the Salmonella, this informative picture book introduces young readers to helpful and harmful germs, exploring their discovery; the breakout of historic diseases; the invention of pasteurization, vaccination, and penicillin; and other fascinating details about the world of microscopic organisms.



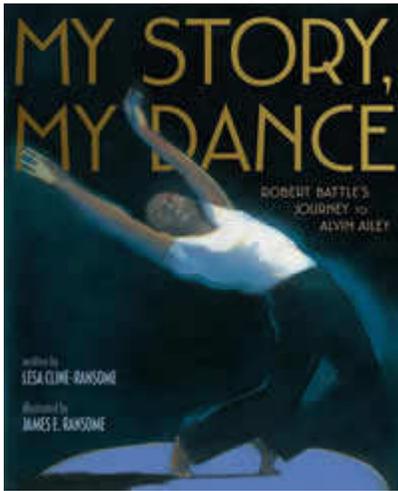
## **Just a Lucky So and So**

Illustrated by James Ransome  
(Holiday House)

"When I pick up that horn, that's all. The world's behind me, and I don't concentrate on nothing but it."

Louis always focused on ways in which he was lucky. Although his New Orleans neighborhood was poor in nearly everything else, it was rich in extraordinary music, from the funeral marches to the honky-tonks. Young Louis took it all in, especially the cornet blowing of Joe "King" Oliver. But after a run in with the police, 11-year-old Louis was sent away to the Colored Waif's Home for Boys where he became a disciplined musician in the school's revered marching band. By the time he returned to his neighborhood, the "King" himself became his mentor and invited Armstrong to play with him in Chicago. Just a Lucky So and So is a joyful tribute to the virtuoso musician with the buoyant personality who introduced much of the world to jazz.

Louis Armstrong has been called the most important jazz improviser in the history of jazz. Superb music. "Upbeat and celebratory—like Pops himself."—*Kirkus Reviews*



## **My Story, My Dance**

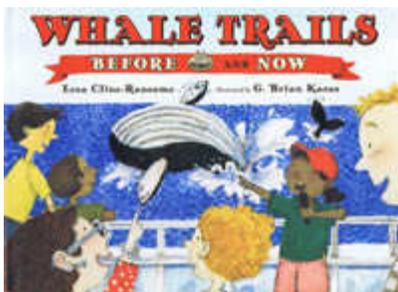
Illustrated by James E. Ransome  
(Simon & Schuster)

A boy discovers his passion for dance and becomes a modern hero in this inspiring picture book biography of Robert Battle, artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

When Robert Battle was a boy wearing leg braces, he never dreamed he'd study at Juilliard. Though most dancers begin training at an early age, it wasn't until Robert was a teenager that his appreciation for movement first from martial arts, then for ballet became his passion. But support from his family and teachers paired with his desire and determination made it possible for Robert to excel. After years of hard work, the young man who was so inspired by a performance of Alvin Ailey's Revelations became the artistic director of the very company that motivated him. Today, under Robert's leadership, Alvin Ailey continues to represent the African American spirit through dance.

- CCBC Choices 2016
- Starred review, Kirkus
- Orbis Pictus Recommended Book
- ALA Notable
- Bank Street Best Book of 2015

"In the hands of the Ransomes, a husband-and-wife team, Robert's life is a classic inspirational story of family love, faith and passionate artistic devotion."—*New York Times Book Review*



## **Whale Trails, Before and Now**

Written by Lesa Cline-Ransome and illustrated by G. Brian Karas

"My father and I live for the sea. He is the captain of the Cufee Whale Boat and today I am his First Mate."

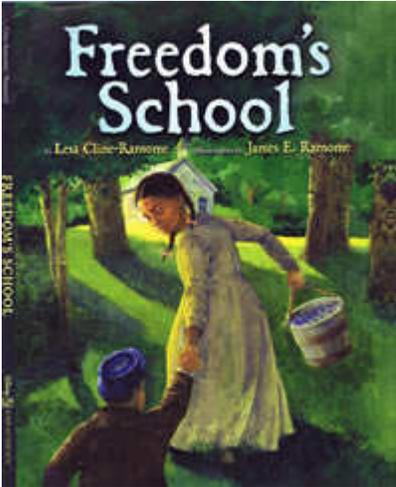
Whale-watching is a hugely popular pastime: at least 13 million people take whale-watching trips each year. but in the past, whaling ships hunted these animals to use their blubber for fuel and their bones for fishing hooks. As the whale population thinned, fortunately hunting ceased. Now, whale lovers go out on boats just to get a glimpse of these giant endangered creatures.

Narrated by a little girl out on the waves with her father, this is a story of marine history and the differences between then and now.

Henry Holt and Co.  
ISBN 978-0-8050-9642-2

- Starred review, Kirkus

- Kirkus Best Books of 2015
- 2016 Notable Social Studies Trade Books



### Freedom's School

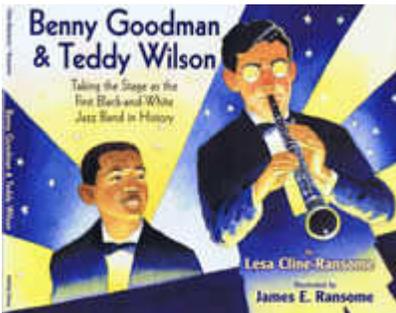
Written by Lesa Cline-Ransome and illustrated by James E. Ransome

When Lizzie's parents are granted their freedom from slavery, Mama says it's time for Lizzie and her brother Paul to go to a real school—a new one, built just for them. But will it be strong enough to stand forever?

"eloquent testament to the overriding importance of school"—  
Kirkus

Disney Hyperion  
ISBN 978-1-4231-6103-5

- CCBC Choices 2016



### Benny Goodman & Teddy Wilson: Taking the Stage as the First Black-and-White Jazz Band in History

Written by Lesa Cline-Ransome and illustrated by James E. Ransome

Brought together by the love of jazz, Benny Goodman and Teddy Wilson is the story of how two musical prodigies, one a young boy who studied music at Tuskegee College in Alabama, the other the son of struggling Jewish immigrants from the West Side of Chicago, came together through music and helped create the style of music known as swing.

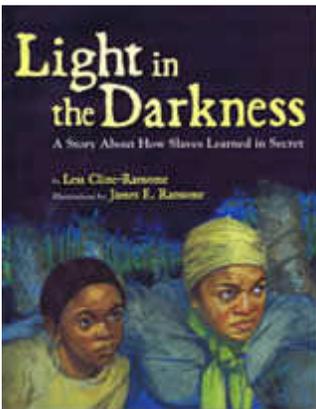
Holiday House Publishers  
ISBN 978-0-8234-2362-0

### Light in the Darkness

by Lesa Cline-Ransome, illustrated by James Ransome

Based on historical fact, *Light in the Darkness* is a dramatic story of the determination of slaves to learn to read and write, despite the dangers from slave patrollers. "Rosa is eager to learn her letters. After the letters come words, and after the words come reading. ... Finally they [Rosa and her Mama] reach their destination: a hole dug in the ground and covered with branches. They climb down and begin making the shapes that Morris teaches them: A...B...C..."

Publisher: Disney Hyperion Books  
ISBN 978-142313495-4



- Junior Library Guild selection
- CCBC Choices  
2014 2014 Notable Children's Book in Language Arts