

# SAVOR THE TIME LEADING UP TO THE HOLIDAYS



**caroline luzzatto**  
bookworms

HERE IS NOTHING harder than waiting. Winter break hasn't arrived, it's not quite cold enough to snow, it's not time to light the candles for Hanukkah, it's not time to open the gifts under the Christmas tree, but the anticipation is almost overwhelming. You could try to ignore it all, but there's a better choice: Embrace that wait, soothe that impatience, and enjoy that slow countdown by savoring each day with a story about winter, holidays and the loving spirit of the season.

**"The Great Spruce"** by John Duvall, illustrated by Rebecca Gibbon. (Ages 5 to 8. G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers. \$17.99.)

First-time author and arborist John Duvall dedicates his book to "everyone who has ever climbed a tree," and his passion for trees is clear on every page of this gentle story of a Christmas tree. Borrowing from New York City's history, his story grows from a simple idea – that a boy wants to share his tree with the world but doesn't want to chop it down – and turns into a cel-

ebration of the season, community spirit and environmental responsibility.

**"Samson in the Snow"** by Philip C. Stead. (Ages 4 to 8. Roaring Brook Press. \$17.99.)

Samson the peaceful woolly mammoth tends his garden and thinks he might never know what it's like to have a friend. When a sudden storm covers him and his flowers with snow, however, he remembers a little bird who stopped by his flower patch – and decides "it is better to walk than to worry." The mammoth wanders through beautifully textured snowy scenes as his journey brings him to not just one new friend, but two – a simple, kind ending to a chilly winter book about the warmth of friendship.

**"This First Christmas Night"** by Laura Godwin, illustrated by William Low. (Ages 2 to 6. Feiwel and Friends. \$16.99.)

In scenes softly illuminated by starlight, lanterns and glowing angels, Laura Godwin's Nativity story focuses on the sights, sounds and

smells as a weary couple search for refuge: "See this man, Joseph, this woman, Mary. Feel the frost on this clear Bethlehem night." Surrounded by cattle, doves and the smell of hay, a child is born – and just like that, the simple story, filled with calm, introduces the first Christmas to young readers.

**"Wonderful Winter: All Kinds of Winter Facts and Fun"** by Bruce Goldstone. (Ages 4 to 8. Henry Holt. \$17.99.)

"Winter is a season of wondering and waiting," as Bruce Goldstone writes – but after that quiet, snow-coated opening, the book is off like a bobsled, slipping from approachable discussions of daylight to explanations of how evergreens stay green, icicles form and ice skaters glide. The book focuses on how winter looks, sounds and feels, with tidbits about the season and a wealth of appealing photos of winter animals and scenery. It ends with activities and projects that can be done even before the snow starts falling.

**Caroline Luzzatto**, luzzatto.bookworms@gmail.com

