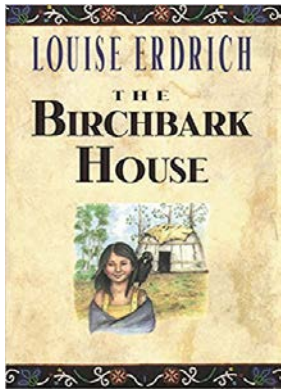


## 2019 Phoenix Award Winner

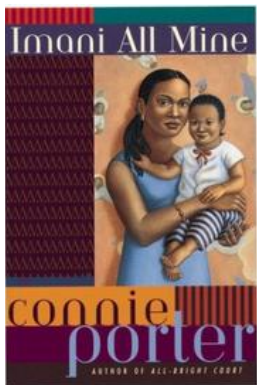
***The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich**  
Hyperion, 1999



Taking young Omakayas through one year of shifting seasons, Louise Erdrich's beautifully written *The Birchbark House* offers memorable characters; rich, vivid settings and experiences; and authentic historical detail. The rhythm of Omakayas's daily life—the chores she hates, her relationships with her siblings, her friendship with Andeg the crow—provides insight into the Ojibwa experience in the mid-nineteenth century. The author populates her novel with complex, larger-than-life figures like Old Tallow, a powerful and isolated old woman who plays an important role in Omakayas's life. Erdrich's illustrations heighten the sense of place and reinforce the book's gentle humor. By offering young readers an opportunity to explore how Native Americans viewed the white man's tyranny, the novel serves as a counterpoint to prevailing narratives of the "frontier." Combining realism and mysticism to create a layered but cohesive story, *The Birchbark House* captures the importance of storytelling as a means to preserve cultural memory.

## 2019 Phoenix Honor Book

***Imani All Mine* by Connie Porter**  
Houghton Mifflin/Mariner, 1999



The emotional intensity of *Imani All Mine* comes from the pitch-perfect voice of teen mother Tasha from inner-city Buffalo. This fifteen-year-old's African-American vernacular never flags in its raw power to shock and compel belief. Her baby girl Imani, or faith, becomes the abiding source of Tasha's will to surmount rape, racism, and drug-dealing violence. Tasha's love for her daughter and her anguished attempts to be a good mother, despite her youth and ignorance, endure without support from her own single mother and many teachers. Her terror that she might have harmed Imani by shaking her in a moment of frustration is as palpable as her horror of contact with the boy who preyed upon her. The book is heart-rending and hilarious, hurtful and healing in its surprising turns of phrase and truthfulness to Tasha's lived experience. Connie Porter's rendering of sexuality, maternity, and spirituality reveals Tasha's inimitable being with daring originality.