



## Early Years Winner Citation

The Neev Book Award for distinguished children's literature recognises outstanding writing that leads to a fuller understanding of Indian lives and stories -- books that build empathy and resilience, explore conflict, negotiate identity, and inspire change. This annual award encourages and promotes Indian children's literature globally.

Publishers across India submit titles for consideration. An independent jury uses a rigorous process to establish a shortlist in four categories: Early Years, Emerging Readers, Junior Readers, and Young Adult. The criteria include the quality of writing, interpretation of theme, development of plot, portrayal of characters, crafting of setting, and the overall presentation of the book. After months of deliberation, the four books chosen for this award are those which best voice the evolution of Indian lives and stories.

**The 2021 Neev Book Award, in the category of Early Years, is presented to Ammu and the Sparrows, written by Vinitha R, illustrated by Jayesh Sivan, and published by Pratham Books.**

Parental discord wreaks havoc on a young child. Neither Amamma nor the sparrows attempt to moralise or solve Ammu's problems. Instead, the sparrows make a parallel connection to the situation allowing for the problem to sit side by side as the child navigates his emotions. Like the writing, the art work demonstrates the raw nature of pain and brilliantly uses negative space to create room for the outpouring of emotions.

