

CORETTA SCOTT KING AWARD 2003



DISCUSSION GUIDE

American Library Association
Social Responsibilities Round Table
Coretta Scott King Task Force
www.ala.org/srrt/csking

THE CORETTA SCOTT KING AWARD: A LIVING LEGEND

For over thirty years, books by African American writers and artists have been honored by receiving the Coretta Scott King Award. This Award promotes understanding and appreciation of the culture of all peoples and their contributions to the realization of the American dream. The Award is designed to commemorate the life and works of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and to honor Mrs. Coretta Scott King for her courage and determination to continue the work for peace and world brotherhood. The multidimensional characteristics of the authors' and illustrators' works reflect the African American experience from both the historical and contemporary perspectives. Opportunities to celebrate the rich and powerful experiences through these books lie in the hands of the adults in children's and young adults' lives. This discussion guide is, therefore, dedicated to those teachers, parents, librarians, booksellers, and caregivers who are committed to enriching the lives of children and young adults with quality literature. From broad thematic categories characterize this year's winners: "Search for Identity," "Fantasy," "Art Appreciation," and "Courage and Determination."

THE CORETTA SCOTT KING AWARD DISCUSSION GUIDE was prepared by members of the 2003 CSK Award Jury: Deborah Burns, Patti Carleton ayo dayo, Darwin Henderson, Chrystal Jeter, Veronica Stevenson-Moudamane.

Edited by: Fran Ware and Carole McCollough, CSK Award Jury and Task Force Chairs

THE CORETTA SCOTT KING AWARD SEAL was designed by internationally known artist Lev Mills in 1974. The symbolism used in designing the seal centers around Dr. King's teachings and doctrines, the purpose for which the Award was founded.

The basic circle represents continuity in movement, revolving from one idea to another. Within the circle is the image of a black child reading a book. The five main religious symbols below the image of the child represent nonsectarianism. The superimposed pyramid symbolizes both strength and Atlanta University, where the Award was headquartered at the time the seal was designed. At the apex of the pyramid is the dove, symbolic of peace, one of Dr. King's doctrines. The rays shine toward peace and brotherhood

ABOUT THE AWARD

The CSK Award has grown since its conception in the late 1960s. At its humble inception at the May 1970 dinner gala of the New Jersey Library Association, Lillie Patterson was honored for her biography, Martin Luther King, Jr., Man of Peace. In 1972, CSK held its first breakfast at an ALA conference site (but without ALA recognition). Official affiliation with SRRT came in 1980, and in 1982 the American Library Association recognized the Coretta Scott King Award as an association award. Success of the CSK Task

Force can be attributed to the work of tireless volunteers and visionary founders. For a more complete history consult two works: *The Coretta Scott King Awards Book, From Vision to Reality* Edited by Henrietta Smith, American Library Association, 1994 and *The Coretta Scott King Awards Book, 1970-1999*, Edited by Henrietta M. Smith, American Library Association, 1999.

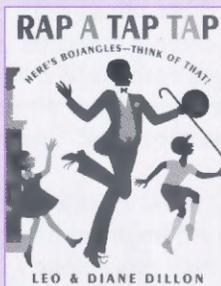
Among their many other functions, book awards provide a simple means for casual browsers in bookstores and in libraries to find material that is engaging, well crafted, and satisfying both emotionally and intellectually. The Coretta Scott King Award particularly introduces the best in African American literature to all children. The Award now graces dozens of titles from picture books for the smallest children to novels and nonfiction for teenagers. In this guide, we have examined some of these titles from different angles and perspectives.



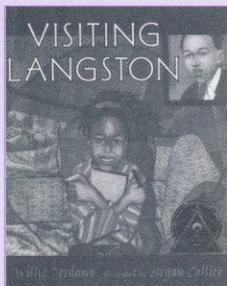
Coretta Scott King Illustrator Awards



King Illustrator Award
Talkin' About Bessie
The Story of Aviator Elizabeth Coleman
Nikki Grimes
Illustrated by E. B. Lewis
Orchard Books, an Imprint of Scholastic, Inc.

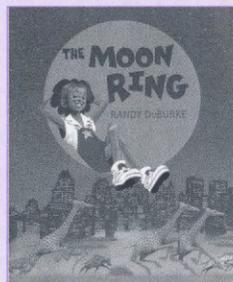


King Illustrator Honor Book
Rap a Tap Tap:
Here's Bojangles—Think of That!
Leo and Diane Dillon
Orchard Books, an Imprint of Scholastic, Inc.



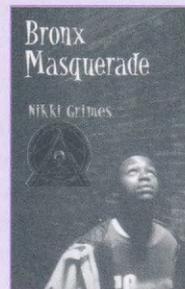
King Illustrator Honor Book
Visiting Langston
Willie Perdomo
Illustrated by Bryan Collier
Henry Holt and Co.

John Steptoe New Talent Awards



John Steptoe New Talent Illustrator Book Award
The Moon Ring
Randy DuBurke
Chronicle Books

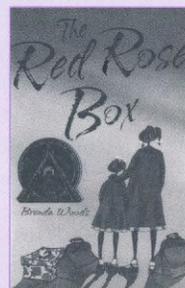
Coretta Scott King Author Awards



King Author Award
Bronx Masquerade
Nikki Grimes
Dial Books



King Author Honor Award
Talkin' About Bessie
The Story of Aviator Elizabeth Coleman
Nikki Grimes
Illustrated by E. B. Lewis
Orchard Books, an Imprint of Scholastic, Inc.



King Author Honor Award
The Red Rose Box
Brenda Woods
G. P. Putnam's Sons



John Steptoe New Talent Text Award
Chill Wind
Janet McDonald
Frances Foster Books
Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Talkin' About Bessie

The Story of Aviator Elizabeth Coleman
Orchard Books, an Imprint of Scholastic, Inc.
Nikki Grimes
Illustrated by E. B. Lewis

In *Talkin' About Bessie: The Story of Aviator Elizabeth Coleman*, E. B. Lewis illustrates Nikki Grimes's twenty-one poetic remembrances of the first African American female pilot. Each gracefully composed painting places Bessie at the center—courageous, pensive, playful and proud. Lewis's precise attention to historic detail in oversized watercolor paintings parallels and extends Grimes's poetry. His skillfully drawn, realistic and dramatic paintings highlight Bessie's determination, excitement, pride, or joy. Collectively they shine light on the complexities of her life and times.

Nikki Grimes's vignettes speak to the realities of Bessie Coleman's life—her birth in a "dirt-floor cabin," her hard work in field, laundry, beauty shop and school, and finally her triumphs interrupted by her tragic death at the age of 34. Grimes inspires and challenges her readers to be like Bessie.

Lewis's elegant sepia-toned thumbnail portraits accompany each vignette and painting, completing this satisfying package. Together Lewis and Grimes have created a book that soars. With this perfect pairing of illustration and writing we can say with Bessie:

"I count myself twice blessed:

First to have experienced the joy of flight;
and, second, to have shared it with others of my race."

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES:

- Imagine you are a television journalist interviewing Bessie immediately after her first public flight. What would you ask her for the evening news? What do you think the audience would want to know about her?
- Fortitude is a characteristic that Bessie embodies in order to succeed against all odds. Identify other women of color who also had extraordinary fortitude. Explain your choices.
- Design an airplane or flight uniform that Bessie might have used.
- Paint or draw a scene that Bessie may have observed while flying or performing her aerobatics stunts.

RELATED TITLES:

Carver: A Life in Poems by Marilyn Nelson, Front Street
Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters
by Andrea Davis Pinkney, Harcourt
Mary: An Autobiography by Mary E. Mebane, Viking
Barbara Jordan: Speaking Out by James Haskins, Dial Books for Young Readers
Visiting Langston by Willie Perdomo, illustrated by Bryan Collier, Henry Holt and Co.

Bronx Masquerade

by Nikki Grimes
Dial Books

Bronx Masquerade is a rich and memorable novel. Eighteen urban youths share their innermost feelings in their class's open mike poetry presentations. Grimes' characters are expressed through short monologues paired with self-revealing poetry. Grimes boldly offers a glimpse into the heart and psyche of each student—who like many contemporary youth struggle to discover their identities and destinies.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES:

- In *Bronx Masquerade*, the author refers to many Harlem Renaissance poets. Choose one of these poets and research his life to share with your classmates.
- Write a poem, rap, or song about your life or school. Then write what you think Tyrone would say about your poem.
- Plan a grade-level Poetry Slam.

RELATED TITLES:

Fast Sam, Cool Clyde, and Stuff by Walter Dean Myers, Viking
A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich by Alice Childress, Puffin
Motown and Didi: A Love Story by Walter Dean Myers, Viking
The Skin I'm In by Sharon Flake, Jump at the Sun/Hyperion

The Red Rose Box

by Brenda Woods
G. P. Putnam's Sons

The Red Rose Box is a deceptively simple coming of age tale of two young girls growing up between two worlds: the Jim Crow cotton fields of Sulphur, Louisiana, and the desegregated neighborhoods of Los Angeles in the 1950s. Brenda Woods unveils the promise and hope of ten-year-old Leah and her sister Ruth on their journey with Leah's red rose travelling case. Woods vividly portrays the young protagonists' internal and external struggle for a sense of place and belonging.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES:

- If you could create your own personal "Red Rose Box," what would you put in it?
- Do you have sisters or brothers? Select three things in your relationship with your siblings and compare (or contrast) them with the relationship between Leah and Ruth.
- Fast-forward the story to the 1990s. What issues do you believe Leah and Ruth would be facing in their struggle to find a sense of place and belonging?

RELATED TITLES:

The Other Side: Shorter Poems by Angela Johnson, Orchard
Circle of Gold by Candy Dawson Boyd, Scholastic
A Little Love by Virginia Hamilton, Philomel
The Friendship by Mildred Taylor, Dial Books for Young Readers
Trouble's Child by Mildred Pitts Walter, Lothrop

Chill Wind

by Janet McDonald
 Frances Foster Books/Farrar, Straus, and Giroux

Chill Wind by Janet McDonald is the story of Aisha with a capital "A"—for attitude! An unwed teen mother of two, she is forced to face the termination of welfare benefits. Aisha must deal with an alcoholic mother and an absentee father and navigate her way through life. McDonald's use of perfect, consistently written urban dialect depicts Aisha as a tough, resilient character who develops and matures into a caring adult, thanks to an incredible stroke of luck.

This fast-paced novel captures the ambivalence, anger, and pain of growing up in an urban setting, needing love, and seeking support. Teens aged 15 to 17 will recognize the main characters' struggles.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES:

- Create a diagram of the major choices made by Aisha throughout the book. Identify those choice opportunities that might have made a positive difference in her life.
- Describe the relationship between Aisha and her father.
- Is Aisha's "stroke of luck" believable? Realistic?
- Select a group of students to role-play a scene from the book.

RELATED TITLES:

Money Hungry by Sharon Flake, Jump at the Sun/Hyperion
Slam by Walter Dean Myers, Scholastic
Like Sisters on the Home Front by Rita Williams-Garcia, Dutton
Miracle's Boys by Jacqueline Woodson, G. P. Putnam's Sons

The Moon Ring

by Randy DuBurke
 Chronicle Books

In *The Moon Ring*, author/illustrator Randy DuBurke visually sends his main character, Maxine, on a wild and surreal adventure across space and time that begins with a simple wish on a sparkling, silver sphere: a magic ring. Part fairy tale, part fantasy, *The Moon Ring* takes Maxine through colorful flights of fancy from one continent to another, and releases her safe and sound back in her own bed. From cover to cover, DuBurke's bold, graphic art and cartoon-style illustrations chronicle Maxine's journey and highly imaginative adventure.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES:

- In what ways does *The Moon Ring* create a "you are there" experience for the reader?
- Think of yourself as a TV reporter traveling with Maxine and her magic moon ring. What would you say on the 6 o'clock news?
- Imagine you had a moon ring, and create an illustration of where you would go.

RELATED TITLES:

C.L.O.U.D.S. by Pat Cummings, Lothrop
Half a Moon and One Whole Star by Crescent Dragonwagon, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney, Macmillan
The People Could Fly by Virginia Hamilton, illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon, Knopf
Visiting Langston by William Perdomo, illustrated by Bryan Collier, Henry Holt and Co.

Visiting Langston

Illustrated by Bryan Collier
Text by Willie Perdomo
Henry Holt and Co.

In *Visiting Langston* Bryan Collier brilliantly crafts a watercolor and mixed media collage tribute to poet Langston Hughes. Through the eyes of a joyful little girl accompanied by her father, Collier takes us through Hughes's Harlem of the 1920s. Collier uses a "loving hands" motif to exquisitely capture the jazz era with rich and complex textures.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES:

- We celebrated Langston Hughes's 100th birthday in 2002. Research his life to discover what other contributions he made to the arts.
- Create a word search using words from a Langston Hughes poem.
- Design a travel brochure for a person visiting Harlem in the 1920s and 1930s.

RELATED TITLES:

Black Troubadour: Langston Hughes by Charlemae Rollins, Rand McNally
Goin' Someplace Special by Patricia McKissack, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney,
Anne Schwartz Book/Atheneum

Rap a Tap Tap: Here's Bojangles—Think of That!

Written and Illustrated by Leo & Diane Dillon
Orchard Books an Imprint of Scholastic, Inc.

In rhythmic strides and side steps, Leo and Diane Dillon, author-illustrators of *Rap a Tap Tap*, honor the spirit of legendary entertainer Bill "Mr. Bojangles" Robinson. Bojangles, whose career spanned vaudeville, the nightclub circuit, Broadway, and films, is presented in a quickly moving tour-de-force of joyous energy as he tap dances through the pages.

The Dillons effectively depict Bojangles' fast tap dance movements through the use of gradations of gray shadowed legs and feet. Bojangles's is presented as a stylized figure in bold watercolor illustrations. Inspired by Harlem Renaissance artist Aaron Douglas, the Dillons' rhythmic text parallels the often overlapping and multilayered cityscape as Bojangles tap dances up a flight of stairs and tips his hat on his final bow.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES:

- Research Bojangles on the web. Identify three African American dancers from the past or present who were influenced by Bojangles.
- Look at a Shirley Temple movie co-starring Bojangles. Compare the dance scenes to the Dillons' *Rap a Tap Tap* depiction of Bojangles.
- Compare the illustrations in *Rap a Tap Tap*, a picture book about dance, with illustrations in other books by Chris Myers and Jerry Pinkney. Describe

how illustrators suggest movement through illustration.

- Design a movie playbill or poster that would attract moviegoers to see Bojangles.

RELATED TITLES:

Piano Man by Debbie Chocolate, illustrated by Eric Velasquez, Walker & Co.
Uptown by Bryan Collier, Henry Holt
Harlem by Walter Dean Myers, illustrated by Chris Myers, Scholastic
Black Dance in America: A History Through Its People by James Haskins,
HarperCollins

CORETTA

SCOTT

KING

AWARD

2003

DISCUSSION

GUIDE