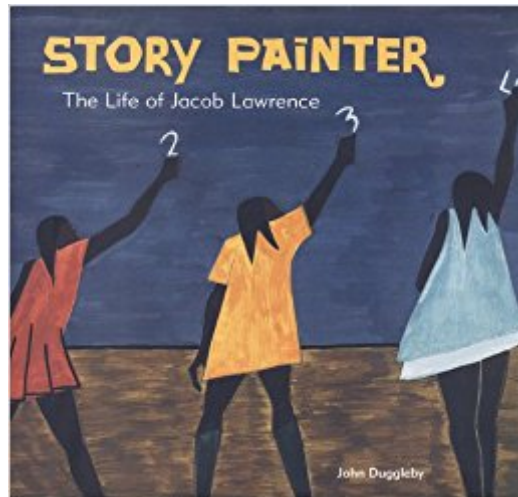




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Story Painter: The Life Of Jacob Lawrence



Synopsis

The paintings of Jacob Lawrence tell stories. Stories of enslavement and freedom, of human migration and renaissance, of struggle and of triumph. A collection of these stunning paintings provides the backdrop for this exceptional biography which tells the story of one of our finest living painters—from his family's experience in the great migration North, to his growing up in the midst of the Harlem Renaissance, to his rise as one of the most renowned painters of African American life. With over twenty-five full-color reproductions and an insightful glossary, not only is this an easy-to-read, engaging biography, it's also an excellent starting point for discussions about American history. Awards and honors for *Story Painter*: 1998 CCBC Choices, Biography/Autobiography 1999 IRA/CBC Notable Trade Books--Social Studies 1999 Carter G. Woodson Award 1999 Parents' Guide/Children's Media award, non-fiction category Publishers Weekly, starred review Smithsonian Notable Award Parent Council Ltd. - Gold

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Customer Reviews

Children who have been captivated by the bold, colorful paintings of Jacob Lawrence (1917-) in the context of African American history lessons now have a chance to learn the full life story of this unique, dedicated artist. Though it's hard for any text to stand on equal footing with artwork this imaginative and strong (25 full-color reproductions from Lawrence's *Migration* series, *Toussaint L'Ouverture* series, and more, are included here), John Duggleby has crafted the tale of Lawrence's life into a satisfyingly rich, and quick-moving biography. As much a history of cultural life in 1930s Harlem as it is the story of Lawrence's upbringing, *Story Painter* also includes all the details

necessary to make Lawrence's personal artistic life spring to life. We see him start experimenting with tempera paints at an after-school program at the same time as he's running off to hear special black history lectures at the Harlem libraries. The dedication to his craft was obvious at a very young age, earning him support from prominent black artists such as Augusta Savage and winning him great working gigs such as the Easel Project, which paid him \$23.86 per week for two paintings every six weeks. Museums and gallery owners courted him as soon as he showed his work publicly; by age 30, he was considered America's foremost black artist. A few years later this dizzying ascent took its toll, and Lawrence spent a nine-month stint in a hospital for depression. He soon righted himself, eventually moving to Seattle to become a distinguished art professor and mentor.

Exquisitely designed, *Story Painter: The Life of Jacob Lawrence* builds a relationship between the full-page illustrations and their concurring partnered text that makes this book a visual splendor. The strongest color in a painting, for example, may show up as the background color for the accompanying words, or may be used to make a sidebar snippet of African American poetry pop off the page. The handful of evocative black-and-white photographs of Lawrence feature beautifully drawn borders and are set against rich backgrounds of color. This level of design sophistication and care is reverential to Lawrence and a great reward for all readers who care about art and its pursuit. (Ages 9 to 12) --Jean Lenihan

Duggleby (*Artist in Overalls: The Life of Grant Wood*) once again enlarges upon themes in an American artist's life and work to create a gratifying portrait of a particular time and place. Lawrence's expressionistic, stark paintings, in excellent full-page color reproduction, together with an artful layout incorporating the artist's blocky color fields and rhythmic patterns, nicely complement Duggleby's measured account of a materially poor but culturally rich childhood and Lawrence's subsequent struggles and successes. The author subtly works in the effect of the dearth of materials during the Depression on Lawrence's emerging style as well as the artist's mission to convey the legacy of African Americans in his series paintings. The painter's links to the Harlem renaissance, the segregated military, civil rights and black pride movements are explored through anecdotes, photographs, paintings and opening quotes for each chapter, by such contemporaries as Langston Hughes, Fats Waller and Martin Luther King Jr. Excerpts from Lawrence's *Toussaint L'Ouverture* (1937-1938), *Migration of the Negro* (1940-1941) and *Harriet and the Promised Land* (1967) series provide lessons in earlier black history as well as art appreciation, and pave the way for his milestone acceptance in the art world at large. This solid work of biography/art history commemorates an extraordinary living artist and pays tribute to Lawrence's determination, optimism

and originality. Ages 6-12. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Excellent story about the artist.

Great piece of art-literature convergenceLawrence is a master in poetically and esthetically driving us through his social history through images which are an exceptional treasure.

Clearly explains the life and philosophy behind the works of this amazing artist. Makes the stories that Jacob Lawrence's paintings tell come more alive - if that is even possible. A great tool to help young and old appreciate this great artist.

good for book report

as an art teacher, i try to sneak in as much art history as possible; this book was perfect for 4th-5th graders to read a chapter, then paint about jacob lawrence's experience during that part of his life---they were always excited to hear what happened to him next:) great intro to the Harlem Renaissance!

book great - overpriced

Great book for African American kids.

This book not only offers a well-written, informative overview of Jacob Lawrence's life but also offers snapshots of historical events that were part of his times and of his people's past, which he recounted in his powerful paintings. The book uses Lawrence's art beautifully, showcasing its brilliance while also using it to help tell the often-compelling story of the artist's life; excellent opening quotes in each chapter (from various cultural figures throughout Lawrence's lifetime) also subtly enhance the meaning of the text. Worth it for the art reproductions alone, and a story that shows how an artist and a person can be an interesting product of culture, society, and innate genius.

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