

CORETTA SCOTT KING BOOK AWARDS

2012 Discussion Guide



American Library Association

Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table

CORETTA SCOTT KING BOOK AWARDS COMMITTEE

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Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table
Coretta Scott King Book Awards Committee • www.ala.org/csk

This Coretta Scott King Book Awards Discussion Guide is prepared by the 2012 Coretta Scott King Book Awards Committee Chair, Chrystal Carr Jeter, and by members of the 2012 Coretta Scott King Book Awards Jury: Dr. Jonda C. McNair (Chair), Dr. Lesley Colabucci, Mary Cooper, Eboni Curry, Dr. Cora Dunkley, Diane Foote, and Debby Gold.

The activities and discussion topics are developed to encompass state school standards. These standards equally apply to students from all linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Students will demonstrate their proficiency, skills, and knowledge of subject matter in accordance with national and state standards. Please refer to the Web site www.edu.gov for detailed information.

The Coretta Scott King Book Award: A Living Legend

The Coretta Scott King Book Awards have grown since their conception in the late 1960s. At a dinner gala of the New Jersey Library Association in May 1970, Lillie Patterson was honored for her biography, *Martin Luther King, Jr.: Man of Peace*. In 1972, the first Coretta Scott King Book Awards breakfast was held at an ALA conference site. Official affiliation with the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) came in 1980, and in 1982, the American Library Association recognized the Coretta Scott King Award as an association award.

During the 2003 ALA Midwinter meeting, the Coretta Scott King Task Force joined the Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT). The affiliation with EMIERT gave the group a new name: the Coretta Scott King Book Awards Committee. Success of the committee can be



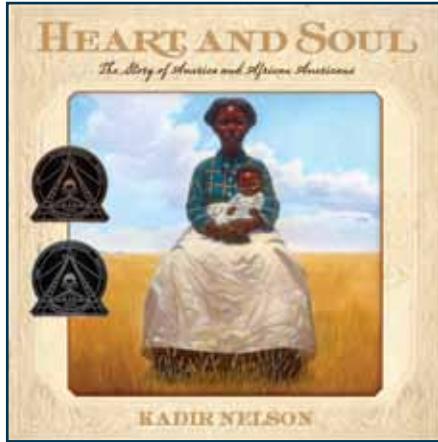
attributed to the work of tireless volunteers and visionary founders. For a more complete history, consult: *The Coretta Scott King Awards Book: From Vision to Reality*, edited by Henrietta Smith, American Library Association, 1999; and *The Coretta Scott King Awards: 1970–2009, fourth edition*, by Henrietta Smith, American Library Association, 2009.

For more than forty years, books by African American writers and artists have been honored by receiving the Coretta Scott King Book Award. This award promotes understanding and appreciation of African American culture and the culture of all peoples. 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 depicted in 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. Among their many other functions, book awards provide a simple means for casual browsers in bookstores, libraries, and schools to find material that is engaging, well crafted, and satisfying both emotionally and intellectually. The Coretta Scott King Book Awards particularly introduce 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 BOOK AWARD WINNER AND HONOR TITLES

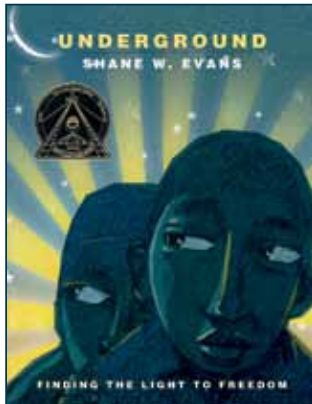


Coretta Scott King Book Award
Author Award, Illustrator Honor Award

HEART AND SOUL: THE STORY OF AMERICA AND AFRICAN AMERICANS

Written and Illustrated by Kadir Nelson

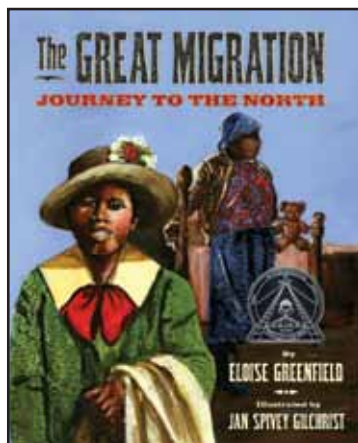
Published by Balzer + Bray
An imprint of HarperCollins Publishers



Coretta Scott King Book Award
Illustrator Award

UNDERGROUND: FINDING THE LIGHT TO FREEDOM

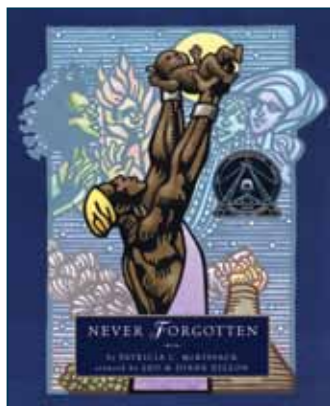
Written and Illustrated by Shane W. Evans
Published by Neal Porter Books/ Roaring Book Press
An imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group



Coretta Scott King Book Award
Author Honor Award

THE GREAT MIGRATION: JOURNEY TO THE NORTH

Written by Eloise Greenfield
Illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist
Published by Amistad
An imprint of HarperCollins Publishers



Coretta Scott King Book Award
Author Honor Award

NEVER FORGOTTEN

Written by Patricia C. McKissack
Illustrated by Leo & Diane Dillon
Published by Schwartz & Wade Books
An imprint of Random House Children's Books



HEART AND SOUL: THE STORY OF AMERICA AND AFRICAN AMERICANS

Kadir Nelson, author and illustrator

Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

Nelson's signature oil paintings accompany this narrated nonfiction journey into the African American struggle for freedom from slavery to contemporary times. Divided into twelve chapters, the book contains detailed supplementary material. The intensity of the portraits, the overall drama embedded in the illustrations, and the powerful voice of the "Everywoman" narrator add emotion and depth that is not typical in history textbooks. Taking on a broad historical range, Nelson features both the ordinary people and the well-known heroes who together changed the world. *Heart and Soul* chronicles the ugliness of slavery, the contributions of African Americans in the building of this great nation, and their endurance and perseverance to become first-class citizens.



Photo by David Harrison

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Complete a Know–Want–to–Know–Learned (KWL) chart for *Heart and Soul*. Reflect on stories, facts, and key individuals from African American history.
- The narrator of *Heart and Soul* speaks forthrightly and does not hesitate to share her unique perspective on history. Consider the significance of these quotes: “The North had won the Civil War; but the South, it won Reconstruction” (p. 45); “...but we also learned that Jim Crow had made the trip right along with us” (p. 56); “It was like the souls of black folks all over the North were waking up” (p. 65). Discuss what the narrator means by these statements and what they mean to you today.
- Using the time line provided in the back of the book (pp. 102–103), select a five-to-ten-year period to highlight in a format of your choice (poster, brochure, PowerPoint, or digital formats using web tools such as Gliffy, YouTube, or Wordle).
- Kadir Nelson conducted personal interviews with elder family members as part of his work on this book. Choose a particular incident described in the book and invite a family or community member who lived during that time period to share his or her firsthand story of that time. Do your best to write his or her story.
- What is missing from the story? What aspects of African American history have not been covered? Pursue research on your own.

RELATED CORETTA SCOTT KING BOOK AWARD TITLES

Ellington Is Not a Street, Ntozake Shange (Simon & Schuster)

Remember: The Journey to School Integration, Toni Morrison (Houghton Mifflin)

Let It Shine! Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters, Andrea Davis Pinkney (Harcourt)

The darkness.



UNDERGROUND: FINDING THE LIGHT TO FREEDOM

By Shane W. Evans

Published by Neal Porter Books/ Roaring Book Press, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group

With sparse text and strikingly evocative images, Evans describes the harrowing journey of a group of slaves as they silently travel through the endless nights, looking up to the stars and moon to guide the way to freedom. Skillful use of perspective helps convey the movement along the Underground Railroad through a muted palette of blues and greens on double-spread illustrations. Describing the dangerous and desperate conditions and condensing them into succinct yet powerful statements, Evans has created a picture book that will be accessible to a wide range of audiences and ages.



Photo by Gary Spector

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

- In the book, the slaves found their way around by watching the position of the moon and stars. Are you able to recognize any constellations at night? Investigate other ways astronomy has been used in history.
- Shane Evans's work is reminiscent of scratchboard art. Look up what scratchboard is and try your hand at creating your own artwork.
- Look up National Geographic Online Presents: The Underground Railroad (<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/>) to find out more about this aspect of history.

RELATED CORETTA SCOTT KING BOOK AWARD TITLES

Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom, Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Kadir Nelson (Jump at the Sun, an imprint of Disney Book Group)

Almost to Freedom, Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, illustrated by Colin Bootman (Carolrhoda Books)

The People Could Fly: The Picture Book, Virginia Hamilton (Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Random House Children's Books)



CORETTA SCOTT KING BOOK AWARD AUTHOR HONOR

THE GREAT MIGRATION: JOURNEY TO THE NORTH

By Eloise Greenfield

Illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist

Amistad, An imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

This free verse collection offers emotional and factual insights into the phenomenon of the Great Migration from a range of perspectives. Greenfield also offers her own personal family experience with the journey to a new life in the North. *The Great Migration* can be described as almost an “oral history plus.” It’s conceivable that the different feelings expressed in each poem (hope, fear, sadness, wonder, and more) would all be felt by each individual at one time or another. The storytelling is immediate, without a great deal of embellishment: “They hear the whistle blow / It blows again, not so far away now / They see the train coming closer and closer, and then it stops. They gather / on the platform, hold out their tickets, climb aboard.” A contemporary reader/listener is drawn right into the physical and emotional journey the people endured.



Photo by Monica Greenfield



Photo by Miyoshi Dowden

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Interview a family member, friend, or member of the community who participated in the Great Migration.
- In one of the poems, a young girl is given a teddy bear to take on her journey. Imagine what you would take as a “comfort” item if you were to be relocated in some way. Write a journal entry describing your choice.
- What is the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), and what role did it play in motivating southern African Americans to migrate to the North?
- Compare and contrast the experiences people might have had traveling the path of the Great Migration and the Underground Railroad.
- Choose a city from a southern state (Atlanta, GA; New Orleans, LA, etc.) and calculate the routes and mileage to a city in the North (Chicago, IL; Detroit, MI, etc.). Look up landmarks and other significant historical areas you would encounter on the trip.

RELATED CORETTA SCOTT KING BOOK AWARD TITLES

Almost to Freedom, Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, illustrated by Colin Bootman (Carolrhoda Books)

Goin’ Someplace Special, Patricia McKissack, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney (Atheneum, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing)

God Bless the Child, Billie Holiday and Arthur Herzog Jr., illustrated by Jerry Pinkney (Amistad, an Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers)



CORETTA SCOTT KING BOOK AUTHOR HONOR

NEVER FORGOTTEN

Written by Patricia C McKissack

Illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon

Schwartz & Wade Books, an imprint of Random House Children's Books

This original story in verse represents McKissack's effort to write about the legacy of slavery, specifically about children who were taken and their families who were left behind. Presented as a cycle of poems that incorporate historical fact, mysticism and folklore, this heart-wrenching saga tells the story of Musafa, the son of a blacksmith, who is taken by slavers. Musafa never forgets his connection to his beloved father, his ancestral land, or his family's legacy of craftsmanship. *Never Forgotten* offers children today a slave story that does not sugarcoat the facts but finds a way to emphasize hope.



Photo courtesy of the author



Photo by Lee Dillon

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Closely examine the word choices used throughout the book. Select words that may be challenging or confusing to you (*calabash, countenance, griot*). Search for synonyms and experiment with using the words in journal writing.
- View various videos about the slave trade from sources such as PBS (www.npr.org/programs/re/archivesdate/2004/apr/slavery). What questions about this history arise for you after viewing the video? Compare the images in the film to the stylized illustrations in the book.
- In *Never Forgotten*, the four earth elements (water, fire, wind, and earth) are personified. For instance, "Earth / Seated and still / Sighed deeply." Experiment with personification in your own writing by giving human characteristics to an object of your choice to bring your story to life.
- Research blacksmiths of today. What questions do you have about this work? For instance, what tools are used to forge iron and steel? At what temperature does iron begin to "bend?"

RELATED CORETTA SCOTT KING BOOK AWARD TITLES

Her Stories: African American Folktales, Fairytales, and True Tales, Virginia Hamilton (Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing)

The Negro Speaks of Rivers, Langston Hughes, illustrated by E. B. Lewis (Jump at the Sun Books, an imprint of Disney Book Group)

In the Time of the Drums, Kim L. Siegelson, illustrated by Brian Pinkney (Jump at the Sun Books, an imprint of Disney Book Group)

CORETTA SCOTT KING – VIRGINIA HAMILTON AWARD FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT WINNER

ASHLEY BRYAN

Ashley Bryan grew up to the sound of his mother singing from morning to night and has shared the joy of song with children ever since. A beloved illustrator, he has been the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award Winner, a May Hill Arbuthnot lecturer, a Coretta Scott King Award winner, and the recipient of countless other awards and recognitions. He lives in Islesford, one of the Cranberry Isles off the coast of Maine, where he can often be found with a cluster of children, all singing.



Photo by Bill McGuinness

ABOUT THE CORETTA SCOTT KING-VIRGINIA HAMILTON AWARD FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

The Coretta Scott King-Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement is named in memory of beloved children's author Virginia Hamilton. The annual award is presented in even years (i.e. 2012, 2014, 2016...) to an African American author, illustrator or author/illustrator for a body of his or her published books for children and/or young adults, and who has made a significant and lasting literary contribution. In odd years (i.e. 2013, 2015, 2017...), the award is presented to a practitioner for substantial contributions through active engagement with youth using award winning African American literature for children and/or young adults, via implementation of reading and reading related activities or programs.



VIRGINIA HAMILTON was an award-winning author of children's books. She wrote more than thirty-five books throughout her career, including *M. C. Higgins, the Great*, for which she won the 1975 Newbery Medal. During her lifetime, Hamilton received numerous awards, including the Coretta Scott King Book Award, the Edgar Allan Poe Award, the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, and the Hans Christian Andersen Award.

THE CORETTA SCOTT KING BOOK AWARDS SEAL



The Coretta Scott King Book Awards Seal was designed by artist Lev Mills in 1974. The symbolism in the seal reflects both Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy and the ideals of the award.

The basic circle represents continuity in movement, resolving from one idea to another. Within the circle is the image of an African American 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, the award's headquarters when the seal was designed. At the apex of the pyramid is the dove, symbolic of peace. The rays shine toward peace and brotherhood.

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