

Locomotion

By: Jacqueline Woodson

Publisher: G. P. Putnam's Sons

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Genre: Realistic Fiction, Poetry

Lifeskills: Caring, patience, friendship, perseverance, personal best, courage, pride

SYNOPSIS: "Lonnie C. Motion has had some tough breaks in his life. But this fall, Lonnie's fifth grade class is learning to write poetry and suddenly, Lonnie is finding the words to tell the world about his family, the fire that took his parents away, his little sister, his world." (From the author's website)

BOOKTALK: Through poetry, Lonnie discovers a way to share his feelings about his parents' death in a fire and his sister being adopted while he lives in a foster home. Get a look inside Lonnie's mind at his thoughts, fears, hopes and dreams in the story *Locomotion* by Jacqueline Woodson.

AUTHOR:

Jacqueline Woodson

Jacqueline Woodson has always loved to write. Her books often reflect the difficult issues facing young people today. She was born in Columbus, Ohio and grew up in North Carolina and New York. She currently lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Other books written by the author:

Coming on Home Soon

The Other Side

Our Aunt Gracie

Show Way

Sweet, Sweet Memory

Visiting Day

We Had a Picnic This Sunday Past

CHALLENGING WORDS (pronunciation, spelling, defining):

embarrassed, locomotion, receptionist, epistle, vaporize, slouched, cowl, blasphemous

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is Lonnie's full name, and how did he get his name?
2. Lonnie writes about sometimes going to the drugstore to smell the honeysuckle talcum powder. Why does he do this?
3. Though Lonnie doesn't live with his sister anymore, he often writes about her. What kind of brother is Lonnie to his sister Lili? How do we know?
4. Why do you think Lonnie is so irritated with Ms. Marcus, his favorite teacher, when she assigns the class to write about their families?
5. Lonnie writes four poems about Clyde, the new boy in his class. Why do you think he is so fascinated by Clyde? Do you think he relates to Clyde in any way?
6. Throughout the book, Lonnie's idea of home starts to change. What does home mean to Lonnie at the end of the book? How do his ideas about this seem to change as he stays longer with Miss Edna?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- **Art:**

1. Illustrate poems.

- **Language Arts:**

1. Have students write a poem about who they are.
2. Study different types of poetry and have students write poems in each style.
3. Learn about Langston Hughes and Richard Wright.

- **Research:**

1. Learn about fire safety.
2. Learn about sickle cell anemia.

INTERNET SITES:

Author's website: <http://www.jacquelinewoodson.com>

Poetry: <http://www.suzyred.com/poetry.html>

Fire Safety: <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/kids/flash.shtm>

Sickle Cell Anemia:

http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/blood/sickle_cell.html

Literature circle questions:

http://teacher.scholastic.com/clubs/pdfs/locomotion_t.pdf#search=%22locomotion%20jacqueline%20woodson%22

Richard Wright: <http://www.itvs.org/richardwright>

Langston Hughes: <http://www.redhotjazz.com/hughes.html>

Grades 4-6 Indiana Standards met by this Intermediate book:

Health: 4.1.4, 4.3.2; 5.1.5, 5.3.2; 6.1.3, 6.3.2

Language Arts: 4.3.2, 4.4.1, 4.5.2, 4.5.5, 4.6 (the same for grade 5 & 6)

Science: 4.4.10