

BIRD

Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2007 Grades 6-8

Submitted by Ava Cooper, Literacy Specialist, Westdale Heights Academic Magnet,
Baton Rouge, LA and Graduate Student, School of Library & Information Science, LSU
(Professor: Dr. Margie Thomas)

Bird by Angela Johnson. Penguin Group (USA) (Dial), 2004. 144 p.

Summary

Bird, a thirteen-year-old girl, runs away from Cleveland, Ohio to Acorn, Alabama in search of her stepfather. While in Alabama, Bird hides out in a shed and sneaks into her stepfather's family's farmhouse for food and a shower while they are out. Ethan, a boy who lives in the farmhouse and who received a heart transplant a few years earlier, sees Bird but does not tell his family. He befriends Bird and brings her food and clothing. Bird also makes friends with another boy in town named Jay. Jay is sad because his brother died. It turns out that the heart transplanted into Ethan was the heart of Jay's brother. Bird and Jay instantly connect because they are both still grieving their losses. The story is told by the three main characters in alternating chapters, so the reader gets insight into the emotions of all three. CCBC calls this novel, "a strong and delicate story about love, loss, and letting go."

Awards

ALA Notable Book 2005

ALA Best Books for Young Adults 2005

Author's Biography

Angela Johnson was born in Tuskegee, Alabama on June 18, 1961. She later moved to Windham, Ohio and attended Kent State University. After college she worked as a child development worker. Johnson began writing children's picture books and later moved to books for young adults. Three of Johnson's books have won the Coretta Scott King Author Award.

<http://www.ohioreadingroadtrip.org/johnson/>

http://www.visitingauthors.com/authors/johnson_angela/johnson_angela_bio.html

Other Titles by Angela Johnson

The First Part Last

Heaven

The Other Side: Shorter Poems

Toning the Sweep

When I Am Old With You

Cool Moonlight

Related Titles: Searching for Parents

Becoming Naomi León by Pam Muñoz Ryan.

Bud, Not Buddy by Christopher Paul Curtis.

Walk Two Moons by Sharon Creech.

Classroom Connections

See Tracie Vaughn Zimmer's Teacher's Guide

<http://www.tracievaughnzimmer.com/Bird.htm>

This teacher's guide includes a collection of discussion and comprehension questions for *Bird*. It also has curriculum-related activities for language, technology, music, art, and social studies.

Connections by Elizabeth Dumas, Good Hope Middle School, West Monroe

Grade 6

ELA Unit 2: Fiction-Realistic Fiction

Activity 1: Characteristics of Fiction and Realistic Fiction. Excerpts from this short but very moving novel can be read to illustrate some of the real-life issues found in realistic fiction.

Activity 3: Presentation of Stories with One Prominent Area (Plot, Setting, Character). Since this story is told by the three main characters in alternating chapters, this book can be used to illustrate the dominant presence of character.

Web Links

Angle: A Journal of Arts and Culture

http://www.anglemagazine.org/articles/Bird_on_the_Fly_2230.asp

An article published in *Angle* critiquing *Bird*.

Ohio Reading Road Trip: Angela Johnson

<http://www.ohioreadingroadtrip.org/johnson/>

This site has a biography of Angela Johnson.

Patricia M. Newman: Angela Johnson

<http://www.patriciamnewman.com/johnsona.html>

Site includes a brief biography of Angela Johnson, a list of her books and her contact information.

Tracie Vaughn Zimmer's Teacher's Guide

<http://www.tracievaughnzimmer.com/Bird.htm>

This teacher's guide includes a collection of discussion and comprehension questions for *Bird*. It also has curriculum-related activities for language, technology, music, art, and social studies.

Visiting Authors: Angela Johnson

http://www.visitingauthors.com/printable_pages/johnson_angela_print_info.html

This site includes a biography of Angela Johnson, plus information about her books and her school presentations, including how to get Angela Johnson to visit your school or library.