

BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS

OUR AMERICAN HERITAGE

ROSELMINA INDRISANO, *JOURNAL OF EDUCATION*

In this review we feature a letter written by a president to his daughters, a story of two unlikely friends who were activists for the rights of African Americans and women, a biography of a pioneering Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and an anthology of the works of “America’s world poet” (Poetry Foundation, n.d., n.p.), each book a celebration of our American heritage.

Across the centuries since it was founded, and increasingly in more recent times, the United States has been a diverse nation, enriched by the myriad cultures of its citizens. The diversity of the men, women, and children who are honored in the books in this review afford opportunities for young readers to learn more about the accomplishments of those who share their culture of origin and to become familiar with people of other cultures who have also contributed to our shared heritage.

A second characteristic of these books also affords opportunities for teachers and young readers. Every book represents a genre that is a part of a centuries-old literary tradition. The global digital age of the 21st century requires, as well, increased attention to the ‘new literacies’ described by Donald J. Leu and his colleagues in their chapter that introduces this issue. These scholars provide empirical evidence of the need to teach critical reading of informational text in a balanced literacy curriculum. The books reviewed here augment this emphasis with experiences in appreciating and responding to the traditional literary arts of letter writing, storytelling, biography, and poetry.

We hope the books that are featured in this review will be the impetus for celebration, appreciation, and inquiry for young readers, their teachers, and others who read with them.

of THEE I SING: A Letter to My Daughters

WRITTEN BY BARACK OBAMA

ILLUSTRATED BY LOREN LONG

Published by Alfred A. Knopf, 2010. 40 pages

(Ages 6–8)

Award: Loren Long, 2016 Golden Kite Award for Children’s Book Illustrator, Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators

of THEE I SING: A Letter to My Daughters, the first book in this review of texts on the theme, Our American Heritage, is the creation of Barack Obama, 44th President of the United States and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, but it is the voice of the father, scholar,

and writer that graces the pages of this remarkable book. The eloquent blank verse, accompanied by the captivating pictures of award-winning children’s book illustrator Loren Long, honors Obama’s daughters, Malia and Sasha, and tells the stories of men and women who have contributed to their American legacy.

The cover is a watercolor of two little girls energetically following their dog, the children looking very much as we first met them when they became residents of the White House. Their walk takes them to the double-spread title page that shows their father gazing at them. The book continues to be presented in the same format, the next pages showing the dog following the girls as they march in step. Here the refrain of the storyteller is introduced, a question that begins “Have I told you?” (n.p.)

Have I told you how wonderful you are?
How the sound of your feet
running from afar
brings dancing rhythms to my day? (n.p.)

The pattern of the book is established on the next double-page spread. On the left page, the question is posed followed by a quality their father admires in his daughters or a characteristic of our democracy. On the opposite page is a brief biography of an historically significant exemplar of the quality or characteristic illustrated in a style and hue that are masterful reflections of the text. As the stories are told, Malia and Sasha observe from the opposite page, joined each time by a child who carries a symbol of the person who is featured in the biography. The stories begin with Georgia O’Keefe and the question:

Have I told you
that you are creative? (n.p.)

The artist is shown painting in her familiar style, a brush in one hand, a palette in the other. The reader learns that, “She helped us to see beauty in what is small” (n.p.). The illustration on the opposite page captures one of the many subtle connections in this book; here the picture portrays small, beautiful children, a newcomer holding paintbrushes, and a palette close by.

The tone of the verse and the illustration shift with the introduction of an artist of a different kind, scientist Albert Einstein, who

turned pictures in his mind into giant advances in science,
changing the world
with energy and light. (n.p.)

This time the child who leads the group of observers holds a candle.

A striking illustration of an enlargement of a section of the Vietnam Memorial introduces Maya Lin, the artist who designed this memorial and the Civil Rights Memorial. The profound question that evokes this story is:

Have I told you how important it is
to honor others' sacrifices? (n.p.)

The theme of sacrifice for others is echoed in one of the most poignant verses in the book as Martin Luther King Jr. is honored in language that is both challenging and simple. We are told that he

taught us unyielding compassion. He gave us a dream
that all races and creeds would walk hand in hand.
He marched and he prayed and, one at a time,
opened hearts and saw the birth of his dream in us. (n.p.)

In this story, the child who joins the group holds a book.

The explanatory power of metaphor is engaged as the words of Sitting Bull, a "healer" in the person of a Sioux medicine man, are cited to describe the concept of equality that respects diversity: "For peace, it is not necessary for eagles to be crows" (n.p.). The verses that tell the stories of Martin Luther King Jr. and Sitting Bull are examples of another significant quality of this book, the writer's respect for the young reader. Neither the concept nor the language is ever compromised. Rather, the author conveys complex ideas with a clarity that is enhanced by the effective use of the author's craft.

The theme of the gifts of America's diversity is evident in the stories of people with whom young readers will be familiar and others they will meet for the first time. Among them are Jackie Robinson, who by breaking the color barrier in major league baseball "gave brave dreams to other dreamers" (n.p.); Billie Holiday, the vocalist who by singing her "own song" inspired others to "add their own melodies to the chorus" (n.p.); and Cesar Chavez, who as an "inspiring" young activist assured other farmworkers, "Yes, you can!" (n.d.).

The biographies conclude with two familiar presidents cast in less familiar lights: Abraham Lincoln for showing us that we are "part of a family" (n.p.) and, in the closing lines, George Washington for his role as a founding father.

He helped make an idea into a new country, strong and true,
a country of principles, a country of citizens. (n.p.)

The final double-page spread is a vibrant tableau of America's children, including those we have met on previous pages and others who join them here.

People of all races, religions, and beliefs.
People from the coastlines and the mountains.
People who have made bright lights shine
by sharing their unique gifts
and giving us the courage to lift one another up,
to keep up the fight,
to work and build upon all that is good
in our nation. (n.p.)

The closing page shows the father and his daughters, hand in hand, walking out of the book as their family becomes part of our American heritage.

Have I told you that they are all a part of you?
Have I told you that you are part of them[,] (n.p.)

When teachers consider the ways of *THEE I SING* can contribute to classroom practice, the unique qualities of the book serve as a guide. The text that conveys significant concepts in poetic language and the illustrations that portray the subtleties of the text make the book ideal both for students who are early readers and writers and those who are more mature. While the opportunities for guided appreciation and emulation are limitless, two types of activities are described here, along with suggestions for adaptation to the literacy development of the students. The first is the read aloud, as blank verse, like other forms of poetry, is best appreciated as a vocal art. The second is the creation of stories and books on the theme of *THEE I SING*.

The initial read alouds for early readers and writers might focus on the sounds of the language and favorite words and phrases. Subsequent read alouds might attend to the details in the illustrations that represent the text to gain deeper understanding. Students might then discuss the pages where Malia and Sasha and their gathering group of friends are shown, noting the object the newcomer holds and the way the object symbolizes the person who is the subject of the biography: the boy who holds a book, the girl who carries a tool.

For more mature readers and writers, the initial read aloud might invite attention to the language in order to select personally meaningful lines to reread in ways that convey their significance to the reader. Subsequent read alouds might focus on the author's craft: metaphors, analogies, and symbols, and the ways these language features extend one's understanding and appreciation of the blank verse. Among these examples are the metaphor crafted by Sitting Bull, the analogy of pictures in a scientist's mind to his invention, and the symbolic description of sacrifice represented by the Vietnam Memorial.

Opportunities to use the book as a mentor text are equally limitless, and as noted, the focus of these suggestions is the creation of students' own of *THEE I SING* stories and books appropriate for their developmental levels. Early readers and writers may pose their own "Have I told you?" question directed toward a familiar person they admire and begin by illustrating the question and the answer. Later, they might add captions or text, read the work aloud to small groups of students, and post it in the classroom for others to enjoy.

Adaptations for more mature readers and writers might begin with reading the biographies at the end of the book to select a favorite person and conduct a print and online search for more information in preparation for creating an illustrated book that begins: "Have I told you?" To join the celebration of the diversity of our American heritage co-authors might research and describe a quality and the contributions of a person they admire who looks

like them or speaks the same home language, pose a question, and write and illustrate a biography.

To honor the theme of family that is the essence of this book, the stories and nooks created by students at all levels can become a collection to be displayed in an exhibit open to the entire school community, entitled of *THEE I SING*.

Friends for Freedom: The Story of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass

WRITTEN BY SUZANNE SLADE

ILLUSTRATED BY NICOLE TADGELL

Published by Charlesbridge, 2014. 40 pages

(Ages 6–9)

Awards: Amelia Bloomer Recommended Titles List; CBC Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People; and Starred Review, Publishers Weekly

ELIZABETH NOLAN, *JOURNAL OF EDUCATION*

When Susan and Frederick were growing up, America was growing up, too. And this young country had some strange ideas about friendship. (p. 8)

Friends for Freedom: The Story of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass is a well researched story of two American legends who became devoted friends at a time when friendship between a man and a woman or two people of different races was rare. Suzanne Slade, an award-winning author of more than 100 books for children (<http://www.suzanneslade.com/>), and Nicole Tadgell, an award-winning illustrator, have given readers an engaging book about an unlikely friendship that lasted more than 45 years and ended abruptly in 1895 with Douglass' sudden death after the two had appeared on stage together at a women's rights meeting in Washington, DC.

The *Author's Note*, the *Author's Research Note*, and the *Illustrator's Note* that are included in the back matter provide the reader with greater insight into the creation of this text and the discovery of the way the friendship began. Slade writes about her use of *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony* by Ida Husted Harper, which is considered a primary source because it was written under the guidance of Susan B. Anthony herself. While there are other accounts of their meeting, this biography describes Susan leaving her teaching position in 1849 and returning home to Rochester, New York, the same city where Frederick lived with his family. Susan went directly to the home of the man her father had talked about, the man who had escaped slavery and now gave powerful speeches in support of equality. Susan and Frederick soon learned that they shared a belief in "rights for African Americans and women" (p. 14), and this mission would become the focus of their friendship during a time of great change in America.

In her Notes, Slade also reports her use of historical artifacts such as their written correspondence and recordings, but adds that *Friends for Freedom* "is based on true events, [but] I had to use my imagination to fill in detail when no facts could

be found" (p. 38). In the *Illustrator's Note*, Tadgell describes her careful research, and her efforts are evident in her detailed watercolor illustrations. She adds that, "Keeping the idea of friendship at the core of these illustrations is what really kept everything on track and together" (p. 37). Throughout the book Tadgell's pictures capture the essence of the story—the protagonists' commitment to their cause and to their friendship.

The book begins with a description of the stark contrast between the friends' early lives. Susan was raised in a comfortable home where her parents taught her to read. Frederick was raised in the cruelty of slavery and taught himself to read. (It should be noted that in his autobiography [Douglass, 1997], Frederick recounts the few lessons offered by the wife of his owner before her husband prohibited her from continuing, perhaps causing greater pain than relying entirely on himself.) Then the story of their lives as friends is told in a series of refrains that begin: "Their friendship lasted . . ." (p. 16), "when others laughed" (p. 16), "when rotten eggs flew" (p. 19), "when danger drew near" (p. 21), "when tempers flared" (p. 23), "when fires burned" (p. 26), "when they were apart" (p. 28), and "over forty-five years" (p. 30).

In an effective collaboration of author and illustrator, Slade and Tadgell describe the events that shaped Susan and Frederick's lives as well as their concept of friendship. One notable joining of illustration and words occurs as they recount a meeting in the state capital where Anthony and Douglass spoke against slavery,

Susan and Frederick bravely faced the loud, angry mob. Bloody brawls and fistfights broke out around them

Through it all, the two friends kept speaking. (p. 21)

The illustration that spills onto the facing page shows Douglass as an assertive and persevering speaker and Anthony as a staunch collaborator and advocate. The picture also simultaneously captures the emotions of both opponents and supporters. In another powerful illustration Tadgell depicts the friends arguing, enlarged in the foreground, while in the background, a crowd of onlookers is painted in shades of purple. The reader will be captivated by the anger shown in Anthony and Douglass' eyes as a result of the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which decreed that the right to vote could not be denied on "account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude" (Constitution of the United States of America, Amendment XV, 1789). The friends had also been committed to the same right for women, but it was not included in this amendment.

The country was in an uproar. Everyone took sides.

Frederick was thrilled.

Susan was furious. (p. 23)

But Susan and Frederick kept listening to one another. (p. 24)

The book ends with an emphasis on the important contributions Anthony and Douglass made to ensuring freedom for all Americans and also, to people's ideas about friendship:

No one thought Susan and Frederick would become friends.

But it's a good thing they did.

Because when they grew up, they shared a lasting friendship—, one that helped America grow up, too! (p. 33)

The teaching opportunities for this book are numerous. The text includes features of an informational text, including headings and back matter. The bold blue headings make it possible for a student to overview the text and become intrigued to read more. The substantial back matter includes Author's and Illustrator's Notes, Source Notes, a Selected Bibliography, and a Timeline that can be used to teach students how text features add to a reader's understanding. In addition, the *Author's Research Note* and *Illustrator's Note* can be used to teach the ways authors and illustrators gather information to ensure the accuracy of an informational text.

As school populations become increasingly diverse, educators can use this book to teach the concept of friendship that can develop between people of different races and genders. In telling the story of Susan and Frederick, Slade and Tadgell reveal what it means to be a friend as well as the challenges of friendship. An important message for readers, younger and older, who are navigating their own friendships is shown after Susan and Frederick disagreed,

So they stopped fighting each other and were soon fighting side by side again. (p. 24)

For older students, this book can serve as a mentor text for writing and illustrating a biography. The instruction might begin with a discussion of the author's and illustrator's notes to learn how to gather information, develop a timeline, prepare an outline that can serve as headings, and compile the sources that will serve as a bibliography. Students might work in pairs to search for print and online resources, create an outline, write and illustrate the text, and add the back matter: author's and illustrator's notes, timeline, and bibliography. The books might be included in the classroom library with biographies of the same person placed together to allow students to read and compare the ways the authors and illustrators tell the stories. This shelf might also include a copy of a literary classic: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*.

Finally, included on Suzanne Slade's website is a teacher's guide specific to *Friends for Freedom* developed by the publisher. The teacher's guide includes pre-reading discussion questions, post-reading discussion questions, and activities. "Sketches to Art" brings readers to Tadgell's webpage. These resources could be used as a reference for teachers as they develop their own lessons.

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Suzanne Slade. Retrieved from <http://www.suzanneslade.com/contact-me>

I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark

BY DEBBIE LEVY

ILLUSTRATED BY ELIZABETH BADDELEY

Published by Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2016. 40 pages

(Ages 5 and up)

Awards: ALA Association for Library Service to Children Notable Book, 2017; National Jewish Book Award, 2016; Orbis Pictus Award Honor Book for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children, 2017; Sydney Taylor Book Award, 2017

MICHELLE CARNEY, *JOURNAL OF EDUCATION*

Debbie Levy's award-winning picturebook, *I Dissent, Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark*, provides readers an inspiring biography of the first Jewish woman—and the second woman—to hold a seat on the Supreme Court of the United States. Since her appointment in 1993, Ginsburg has been a steadfast supporter of gender equality and civil rights (*Ruth Bader Ginsburg Biography*, n.d.). Given the significance of equality and civil rights in our American heritage and the ongoing national attention to these movements, this book celebrating the career of a champion of equality and civil rights is a timely addition to upper-elementary and middle school classroom libraries.

Levy presents Ginsburg's biography in a manner that emphasizes the key influences that led Ginsburg to her historic appointment to the nation's highest court. Ruth's earliest inspiration came from her family, particularly her mother. Born in 1933 and raised in a culturally diverse neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York, Ruth was the second child of Celia and Nathan Bader. Celia Amster Bader was a woman with "forward-looking ideas" (n.p.) who "thought girls should also have the chance to make their mark on the world" (n.p.). Levy writes of the frequent library visits Ruth made with her mother—where Ruth read about accomplished women, and in doing so, expanded her understanding of the capacity of women. However, in the world beyond the library Ruth felt the "sting of prejudice" in the signs proclaiming "NO JEWS" (n.p.) and the disappointment of not being able to take shop class instead of sewing and cooking at school. These experiences informed the vow she made to always disagree with such prejudice.

Levy describes young Ruth as an earnest student who excelled in many subjects. She was invited to speak at her high school graduation—sadly, a ceremony she did not attend because her mother died the day before the event. As she and her family grieved, Ruth drew on her mother's hopes for her, and in the fall left home to go to college.

It was at college that Ruth met her future husband Martin Ginsburg—a steadfast supporter of Ruth's goals, including her plan to attend law school. Levy writes, "People thought it was a fine idea for Marty to attend law school. They didn't think Ruth should go. A lady lawyer? People disapproved. Ruth disapproved right back.

So did Marty” (n.p.). With Marty as her husband and equal partner, Ginsburg *resisted* prejudices aimed at her because she was a woman, a mother, and a Jew. She *persisted* until she was hired as “one of the few female law professors in the land” (n.p.).

In 1993, Ginsburg was nominated by President Bill Clinton to be a justice on the Supreme Court. As a justice, it is her responsibility to “decide on the most significant cases and answer the most difficult legal questions in the United States” (n.p.). In this role, Justice Ginsburg responds “I dissent” whenever she deems approval would be a threat to equality or civil rights.

In *I Dissent*, both Debbie Levy, the author, and Elizabeth Baddeley, the illustrator, use the vocabulary associated with argumentation to great effect. On the first two pages, Levy and Baddeley weave image and words to create a powerful double-page spread that shows young Ruth on one side and Justice Ginsburg on the other while highlighting key terms that will be repeated through the rest of the text. On the left page are the words

You could say that Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s life has been one *disagreement* after another.

DISAGREEMENT WITH CREAKY OLD IDEAS.

WITH UNFAIRNESS. INEQUALITY.

RUTH HAS DISAGREED, DISAPPROVED, AND DIFFERED.

On the facing page are the words,

SHE HAS OBJECTED. SHE HAS RESISTED.

SHE HAS DISSENTED.

DISAGREEABLE? NO.

DETERMINED? YES.

This is how Ruth Bader Ginsburg changed her life—
and ours. (n.p.)

The italicized words are presented in 1930s-style typography and are arranged across the pages like banners. As a result readers are cued to the importance of the words to Ginsburg’s life story. With this double-page spread, Levy has also provided a rich instructional opportunity for investigating words associated with agreement and disagreement. Given that effective vocabulary learning builds on the interrelatedness of words and is incremental in nature (Nagy & Scott, 2000), teachers can help students learn these words and others (e.g., persist, argue, consider, opinion, convince) through sorting activities that group words as synonyms and antonyms of *dissent*. Word learning is further supported through multiple exposures as Levy frequently punctuates the text with phrases that include these words. Finally, in a discussion of the text with teacher colleagues, they noted that the collection of words offers opportunities to explore word meaning through morphology (Nagy & Scott, 2000), for example, the root word *agree*, the prefix *dis*, and the past tense marker *ed*.

Baddeley’s illustrations also enhance the themes in Levy’s text. In the double spread depicting Ginsburg’s first plea to the Supreme Court on behalf of equal treatment of women, Baddeley has positioned Ginsburg at the center facing the nine larger-than-life justices. Behind her in the offstage shadows, family groups look on

with hopeful expressions. In another example, Baddeley presents portrait-like illustrations of Justice Ginsburg giving the reader a steady gaze. The nuance of her expressions helps readers understand the words agreement and dissent in terms of the alignment of Ginsburg’s opinions and the decisions of the Supreme Court.

Levy includes a number of additional resources for teachers who wish to continue to explore Ginsburg’s biography. The book includes supplemental sections: “More about Ruth Bader Ginsburg” (n.p.), “Notes on Supreme Court Cases” (n.p.), and a selected biography (n.p.). Levy also includes a link to curriculum guides on her author’s website (Levy, n.d.). More mature students may wish to read Justice Ginsburg’s recent opinion article published in *The New York Times* (Ginsburg, 2016), in which she offers personal advice for living. Finally, teachers may find Jonah Winter’s (2009) bilingual picturebook, *Sonia Sotomayor: A Judge Grows in the Bronx/La Juez que Crecio en el Bronx* an appropriate supplementary text given Sotomayor’s more recent historic Supreme Court appointment.

In closing, Levy acknowledges the acclaim given to Justice Ginsburg by grateful Americans for her continuing commitment to all who seek justice and equality. Featured on the back cover, highlighted in a yellow banner, are Ginsburg’s own words, those that describe her best:

“FIGHT FOR THE THINGS

THAT YOU CARE ABOUT.

BUT DO IT IN A WAY THAT WILL

LEAD OTHERS TO JOIN YOU.”

Supreme Court Justice

Ruth Bader Ginsburg (back cover)

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Poetry for Young People: Walt Whitman

EDITED BY JONATHAN LEVIN

ILLUSTRATED BY JIM BURKE

Published by Sterling Publishing, 1997. 48 pages

Awards: Jim Burke, Gold Medal from the Society of Illustrators; Gold Best Book Awards

(Ages 8 and up)

ELIZABETH NOLAN, *JOURNAL OF EDUCATION*

Poetry for Young People: Walt Whitman is one of the books in the *Poetry for Young People* series, which includes more than 20 titles. The majority of the anthologies are devoted to the work of a single poet, while others feature the poems of many poets on a single theme. Each book is edited by an expert who selects the poems to be included in the anthology, introduces the poet(s) and the poems, and provides guidance to the reader. Jonathan Levin, the editor of this book, was then Dean of Humanities and Professor of Literature and Culture at the State University of New York at Purchase and is now the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Drew University. The illustrator is Jim Burke, who since illustrating this—his first book—has illustrated a number of award-winning picturebooks. In addition, his paintings have been displayed at The Royal Academy of Art Summer Exhibition in London (<http://www.nhia.edu/about/faculty/jim-burke>).

The first line of Levin's biography of Walt Whitman, entitled "I TRAMP A PERPETUAL JOURNEY," describes the uniqueness of this quintessential American poet: "When Walt Whitman began publishing his poems in the mid-1800s, he forever changed people's sense of what a poet could be, and what a poem could look and sound like" (p. 1). More than a century later, Whitman is regarded as "America's world poet" (Poetry Foundation, n.p.) (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/walt-whitman>). The events in Whitman's life that provide a context for the reader could be appreciated as a story in their own right.

Levin writes that for Whitman, "poetry had to breathe the open air. It had to start in the earth, just as a tree sets its roots deep in the soil, and then take light, just as the tree shoots its branches into the sky" (p. 4). These words cause the reader to wonder if this line was the inspiration for structuring the anthology within four themes, On Land, At Sea, At War, and Sky and Cosmos, which suggest a temporal progression. The reader's journey through the poems and paintings on these themes provides insights into an era in America's history from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War revealing both successes and blemishes. Each section begins with lines from a poem that introduce the theme. In the tradition of the *Poetry for Young People* series, Levin briefly introduces most of the poems placing them in context for the young reader. Words that may be unfamiliar are defined in footnotes.

The poet who "loved the diversity of life: so many different people, so many different kinds of plants and animals, cities and farms, dreams and visions" (p. 4) is evident in his poems that honor diversity and country. Whitman's tribute to diversity begins with the poem "I

Hear America Singing," which was published in *Leaves of Grass*: "I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear" (p. 9). The carols are sung by mechanics, a carpenter, a mason, a shoemaker, a wood-cutter, and a mother. The poem comes to a close with a celebration of the uniqueness of every person and song, "Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else" (p. 9). Other poems, among them "Sparkles from the Wheel" and "The Ox-Tamer," portray the diligence of the American people. The land and sea that sustain them are the focus of "Miracles" and "The World Below the Brine."

Whitman's opposition to slavery is the theme of two poems that, joined with Burke's paintings, evoke strong emotions. In the introduction to "A Man's Body at Auction," Levin writes, "the speaker describes a slave who is being sold by an auctioneer" (p. 20); the painting portrays a Black man in shackles, the palms of his hands facing outward. In the second poem, "The Runaway Slave," Whitman praises the "humanitarian spirit that escaped slaves sometimes encountered in the North" (p. 35). The overwhelming brutality is in stark contrast to the occasional instances of compassion.

The poet's patriotism and his admiration for Abraham Lincoln are reflected in a number of poems. Notably, at the beginning of the theme "At War," the introductory verse from "Not Youth Pertains to Me" and the poem, "Come Up From the Field Father," are accompanied by a full-page painting of a young man being cared for by a fellow soldier during the Civil War; the respect of the caregiver is evident. This gentle sentiment is very different from the tone of "The Artilleryman's Vision," a poem describing war itself, and the illustration portraying the death and devastation that result. The familiar "O Captain! My Captain!" and "When the Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" are among the most eloquent tributes to Abraham Lincoln in American literature.

The closing lines of the final poem, "The Spotted Hawk Swings By," from the long poem "Song of Myself," are an invitation to continue to discover the journey of the man through the art of his poetry.

Failing at first to fetch me keep encouraged.
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you. (p. 47)

Like the other anthologies in the series *Poetry for Young People*, *Walt Whitman* can be used in many ways in the classroom. When studying the poems as literature, a quality described by Levin in the biography is central: "Before Whitman, the true mark of a poem was its regular pattern of meter and rhyme: the poet sought to shape his emotions and ideas into an organized form" (p. 4). Whitman, however, created a different form of poetry where his "long lines are not usually structured in this way" (p. 4). As we have suggested in previous reviews of anthologies, the study of Whitman's poetry might begin with reading the poem aloud to listen to the sounds and to gain a sense of personal meaning. Then attention can be paid to the poet's craft. To inform the discussion of the form of Whitman's poetry, teachers might refer to *The Sounds of Poetry: A Brief Guide* by Robert Pinsky (1998). Opportunities to appreciate more traditional poetic devices are found in "Miracles" and "The World Below the Brine" where Whitman uses catalogue, "one of

his favorite devices” (p. 11). Two other poems, “To a Locomotive in Winter” and “The Ox-Tamer,” are “presented as “recitatives, or formal oral presentations, usually made before an audience” (p. 16). In the poem “To a Locomotive in Winter,” readers will notice personification. These features can become the focus of discussions that invite students to describe how the poet’s craft enhances a reader’s appreciation of the poem.

The video series produced by the Favorite Poem Project and available online features a reading from “Song of Myself” (Verses 46 and 52) (www.favoritepoem.org). For students in middle and high school, the videos in this series afford opportunities to listen as a poem is read aloud and to learn the significance of the poem to the reader. In addition, the videos can provide a model for a class “Favorite Poem Reading” and later, a school or community reading.

As a part of an interdisciplinary unit on the Civil War, several of Whitman’s poems can bring a deeper understanding of slavery and the war that threatened the Union. These poems hold the promise of helping students to gain a sense of this historic time and the effects on the people who lived during those years.

This review concludes with a word of caution: some of the poems in the anthology describe extreme cruelty that is also evident in the illustrations. While much of the content may be accessible to younger readers, other poems and illustrations may be more appropriate for older readers. Teachers are advised to be guided by their understanding of the development of their students as they select poems from this classic, richly illustrated anthology that celebrates our American heritage.

References

Pinsky, R. (1998). *The sounds of poetry: A brief guide*. New York, NY: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.

Electronic Resources

Favorite Poem Project. (www.favoritepoem.org). http://www.favoritepoem.org/poem_FromSongofMyself.html

New Hampshire Institute of Art. (<http://www.nhia.edu/about/faculty/jim-burke>).

Poetry Foundation. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/walt-whitman>