I, Too, Am America by Langston Hughes Illustrated by Bryan Collier

Lauren Everett Johnson
LaurenEverettJohnson@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation
Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol33/iss4/5
Author: Hughes, Langston
Title: I, Too, Am America
Illustrator: Collier, Bryan
Year of Publication: 2012
Publisher: Simon & Schuster
ISBN: 9781442420083
Number of pages: 40
Rating: Excellent
Reading/Interest Level: Primary; Intermediate
Keywords: Children’s Books; Picture Books; African American Authors; Poetry; Civil Rights

Review:

The words of Langston Hughes’ iconic poem, “I, Too,” are brought to life in this illustrated children’s book with artwork from award-winning illustrator Bryan Collier. Collier uses a combination of vintage and modern imagery to depict the daily lives of African Americans both today and in the early 1900s, showing how far America has come in reaching the dream of equality Hughes paints in his visionary poem.

“I, Too, Am America” features colorful, dynamic illustrations—some paired with the succinct, powerful lines of Hughes’ poem, and some that stand alone. Collier’s illustrations are more modern than traditional, and while they showcase the contrast between old and new attitudes toward African Americans in the United States, some illustrations are too abstract for young readers to appreciate. Langston Hughes’ poem is relatively brief, and the words are simple, but they will be best understood by older primary and intermediate readers with a background knowledge of civil rights issues in the United States. Teachers will find the book well-suited for reading aloud to the class for Poetry Month or Black History Month.

Reviewer: Lauren Johnson

TEXT © The Children’s Book and Play Review 2013