



## **Bronzeville Boys and Girls**

*Gwendolyn Brooks , Faith Ringgold (Illustrator)*

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This classic picture book from Pulitzer Prize–winning poet Gwendolyn Brooks, paired with full-color illustrations by Caldecott Honor artist Faith Ringgold, explores the lives and dreams of the children who live together in an urban neighborhood. In 1956, Gwendolyn Brooks created thirty-four poems that celebrated the joy, beauty, imagination, and freedom of childhood. *Bronzeville Boys and Girls* features these timeless poems, which remind us that whether we live in the Bronzeville section of Chicago or any other neighborhood, childhood is universal in its richness of emotions and new experiences.

## Bronzeville Boys and Girls Details

Date : Published 2007 by HarperCollins (first published 1956)

ISBN : 9780060295059

Author : Gwendolyn Brooks , Faith Ringgold (Illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 48 pages

Genre : Poetry, Childrens, Picture Books, Cultural, African American

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## From Reader Review Bronzeville Boys and Girls for online ebook

### Laura Mcclanahan says

Genre- Poetry

This is a fun collection of poems reflecting the children in the Bronzeville portion of Chicago, but the author states that the children in the city neighborhood could be from any city, any neighborhood. Each poem's title consists of the name of the child it describes, and each poem is a little unique- appropriate to demonstrate that all children are a little different from each other. For instance, some poems follow an ABAC pattern, others follow an AA BB CC. Some alternate in their syllables, but all have some sort of rhyme and rhythm pattern. Essentially, the poems are about kids and written for kids.

The text actually reminds me of the Spoon River Anthology- a series of poems that describe the deceased from Spoon River, although this work by Gwendolyn Brooks is accompanied by cartoon paintings of children playing in the neighborhood. The illustrator, Raith Ringgold, expertly reveals the details of trees and buildings as well as clothes and facial expressions, but keeping the form in 2-D. This style keeps the child-like feel of the text because in fact many of the poems describe childish things that children would contemplate.

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### Aurora says

Brooks, Gwendolyn. *Bronzeville: Boys and Girls* (2007). Gwendolyn Brooks originally published her anthology of poems in 1956, but this reillustrated edition featuring the beautiful paintings of Caldecott Honor artist Faith Ringgold makes her poetry accessible to a new generation of children. Bronzeville refers to a section of Chicago, but this anthology refers to the children that fill many neighborhoods. Each poem is named after a child or two and shares their emotions and childhood experiences that all readers can enjoy. Mexie and Bridie play tea-party “beneath the clouds and sun.” Charles stays in bed during “sick-times.” Nine year old Michael is afraid of the storm and still hopes to touch his mom’s hand, “Perhaps no one will see.” Its shares poems of new kids coming to the neighborhood and of moving away too, like Maurice. Maurice realizes he can pack his toys to move to his new home but, “Not Bill and Hess and Sam,” his neighborhood friends. Each poem is well written with clear voice and rhythm. Ringgold’s illustrations add a tremendously positive layer of understanding and enjoyment to each poem. The images are vibrant, colorfully illustrating the children playing, with family, friends and neighbors. The reader can easily enjoy Gwendolyn Brook’s anthology of children’s poems over and over as many little readers do with a good book. The target audience is children ages 6-9. Teachers can use it to teach themes about childhood, neighborhood, and family or to teach poetry.

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### Christi says

These poems are about children every where - what they think about and how they see the world. Very nice.

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### Laurie says

I thought by reading this book it brought back memories because I grew up around the Bronzeville Neighborhood. Looking through the book it show exactly what was going on back then people sitting on the porch, looking out the window and children playing outside. The illustrator Faith Ringgold is an author of fifteen children books and won the Caldecott Honor Award in 1992. I like how the author put into the poems each named for a child or children come across as verbal snapshots of the Bronzeville young residents back in 1956.

The pictures in the book are colored illustrated and I love how she detailed the pictures on each page. Gwendolyn Brooks was the first African Woman to publish poems for children in 1958.

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### **Robert Davis says**

Review of 2007 edition.

The pictures are flat, two dimensional and a bit ugly. The poems are at times clever and delightful (*Narcissa*), and at other times they are simply uninteresting and dull (*Charles*). I would like to read a 1957 edition originally illustrated im black and white by Ronni Solbert

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### **Erik This Kid Reviews Books says**

What I Thought– This is a nice multicultural poetry book that takes place in the 1950's (or sometime around then). The poems take place in the Bronzeville section of Chicago, but could be anywhere where there are kids. They are simple poems, narrating from a character's view. I like how it shows how people thought back then (in one poem, a girl is lamenting that she won't be able to run anymore because it's unladylike). Ms. Ringgold's illustrations add a nice, warm feeling to the poetry. Altogether, they are a great team for this book.

\*NOTE\* I got a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review

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### **Mandy Grathwohl says**

Gwendolyn Brooks is a Chicago staple, and when I saw her book on the shelf I jumped at the chance to read it. This book is a love song to the children of Brooks' beloved haunt, the Bronzeville neighborhood in Chicago. It features numerous poems about numerous kids in the neighborhood, some who have more money than others, some who are braver or happier than others. It's a landmark poet writing a landmark book, further promoting the diversity she so happily embodies as a black writer.

Brooks was a great advocate for the sharing of poetry, and had a lifelong commitment to sharing poetry and teaching writing. This book, I feel, is a great physical manifestation of that! By writing to/for the children of her neighborhood, Brooks encourages readers to talk about the poems, to find ones that they identify with perhaps by name, or perhaps by traits. Students enjoy poetry that they can relate to, so what's better than this, especially when it comes to children of the inner city? Who gives them a voice? Brooks does, as do many other poets that emerge from these communities. And in this they cast a wide net of influence that affects the children who read them.

There is nothing overly complex about this collection of poetry, but there is a lot of heart. I would absolutely recommend that a parent pick up this book for home.

## **Mariah Roze says**

Thanks to one of my Goodreads' friends, I was suggested the author Faith Ringgold. My class will be reading all her picture books that my library has because they are great for our Black History Month unit.

This book was written as individual poems. My students found it very confusing and boring. They couldn't understand what was going on at all.

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## **Michael Fitzgerald says**

Ugly, childish illustrations - these are definitely not an improvement on Ronni Solbert's original black-and-white drawings. I was disappointed to see that Solbert's name is entirely absent from this new edition. She doesn't even get a mention in the "about the book" historical bit.

The illustration for Timmy and Tawanda seems to miss the point. While Solbert has chosen a very straightforward portrayal of "Free to raid Mom's powder jar; Free to tackle Dad's cigar," Ringgold has the kids outside playing ball with the dog. I suppose this is "Let our leaping Rover loose," but the presence of an adult couple (the kin arriving in their Sunday best) doesn't really fit. The point is that the kids are left on their own. The illustration doesn't convey what the poem is about.

The poem Dave also has an odd illustration. Solbert shows a boy about four or five giving candy to his "baby sister" who appears to be one year old. Ringgold shows the girl as six or seven and the brother as a teenager (or older). Any girl who is that old shouldn't need to be "soothed." And what is with Ringgold's use of the constantly outstretched arms - arms and hands that are creepily huge? They are everywhere in this book.

Of course, the poems are just as wonderful.

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## **Judi says**

Kirkus: "They show a Bronzeville that bustles with activity, single-family homes sharing the streets with apartment buildings and the occasional vacant lot. The children run, braids and arms out straight, and contemplate in turns, their exuberance tempered by the solemnity of childhood. While it's regrettable that occasionally the specificity of the illustration robs a verse of its universality—the "special place" referenced in "Keziah" is shown to be underneath the kitchen table, for instance—the overall ebullience of the images more than compensates."

This book contains poetry that Gwen Brooks wrote in 1956; in this collection, the illustrator added her illustrations to the poems for children. Now, whether these poems were meant for children, I'm not sure. But the feature is that each poem corresponds to different boys and girls in the Bronzeville neighborhood.

The poetry is general is great. In the context of the book, it makes you feel like you know boys and girls of the neighborhood -- and they are all going around and doing everyday things. It corresponds directly to the African American child experience during the 50s & 60s in this neighborhood. However, because it is poetry, it would be meant for an older audience who could understand it better. Also, the collection is not

relatable now, but could be used for historical context. I'm curious about the poem "Narcissa" - maybe she's a special needs child? Or perhaps just a shy girl? It's not quite clear, but the reader understands that there are a variety of children that live in Bronzeville.

The illustrations are outlined in marker, then colored in with pencil and marker; it makes it seem like an older child put the illustrations together. But with the bright colors and the illustrations being stylized, it makes the whole thing work.

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## **Cheryl says**

If at all possible, find the original with illustrations by Ronni Solbert. Yes, they will reveal that this is not a new book. However, it's not dated, either, imo. It's timeless. Funny at times, poignant at others, with a great understanding of what it means to be a child, esp. a child of the city. I'd love to quote several poems here, but it's short, so only one is 'fair use' I imagine.

\*Charles\*

Sick-times, you go inside yourself,  
And scarce can come away.  
You sit and look outside yourself  
At people passing by.

(Yay for universities for not weeding important books.)

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## **Reed says**

Fun quick read that functions on several levels: poetry book for those who don't like poetry, graphic novel, children's book, and/or adult book to reflect upon ones' childhood. Quite nice for children to see diversity of characters in the artwork.

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## **Tracy says**

Endearing and engaging poems, each titled with a different child's name, reflect universal themes of childhood. From tea-party fun to disappointing Christmas gifts, Brooks shares the world through children's eyes without ever striking a patronizing tone or slapping in a didactic line. Her rhymes feel relaxed and not coerced into place; similarly, her rhythm speaks lightly and reflects the bounce and lilt of children's voices. While many people praise the illustrations of Faith Ringgold, I felt her pictures oversimplified the imagery in their rough black-marker outlines—cartoonish and far too two-dimensional for the richness of Brook's poetry.

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## **Matthew says**

This is truly two stars for me but I am giving it three because of Faith Ringgold's illustrations. I love poetry but I dislike poetry that are designed for little kids and either do not make sense or its too whimsical and

annoying.

This book deals about inner city kids in this particular neighborhood and describing either every child or what they are currently doing on a normal day. By the time I reach twenty pages into this book I wanted to shoot myself in the foot. I am actually shocked by it because so far I have enjoyed every children picture book so far until now.

I highly wouldn't recommend it unless your child like poetry that rhymes.

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### **Ms. Kelly says**

It is a random week in the middle of a random month. You're looking around and your eye alights on a child. Suddenly, a short bit of poetic musing about the child pops into your head.

That is what this book feels like to me. I could imagine the neighborhood, the people, the feeling. In such short spaces of time, the characters were fully realized. The artwork is simple but not simplistic, carrying a lot of emotion in a few lines and swaths of color.

Very nice collection of short poetry for ANYONE. I wouldn't limit this to children. Yes, they are short poems, but while a child will feel satisfied with what the words say, an adult can think about what the words leave unsaid, and the stories that happen *\*after\** the poems are over, and that is the best part, in my opinion!

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