

EDUCATION  
*takes center stage*



*Jacqueline Woodson's*  
**LOCOMOTION**

February 28, 2012  
10:00 am - 11:00 am  
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm



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*about the*  
**SANDLER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS**



At the heart of every great city are its arts institutions – the centers of culture where residents and visitors can share great works of music, dance and theatre from the classics to the cutting edge. Now in its fifth season, the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts at Town Center provides these arts experiences to the students in Virginia Beach and beyond.

Expansive yet intimate, with not a bad seat in the house, the Sandler Center is the perfect setting for every kind of performance, from classical recitals and symphony concerts to modern dance and ballet, theatre and more. And while audiences of every kind are welcome, the Sandler Center offers a special invitation to the region's young people. With the ultimate goal of "every child, every grade, every year," the Sandler Center, in partnership with the Virginia Arts Festival's WorldClass® Education Department, presents specially priced student matinees and public performances making world-class artists accessible to school children in Hampton Roads. And the excitement reaches beyond the stage as well, as the Sandler Center brings these renowned artists into area schools for performances and master classes. For teachers, the opportunities are immeasurable, offering exciting new ways to inspire and enhance their classroom teaching as they weave the arts into their lessons on history, language arts, math and science.

Thank you for joining us this season as we spark your students' imaginations with the joy and power of the performing arts.



*meet the author*  
**JACQUELINE WOODSON**



photograph by Marty Umans © 2006  
Jacqueline Woodson

Born on February 12th in Columbus, Ohio, **Jacqueline Woodson** grew up in Greenville, South Carolina and Brooklyn, New York and graduated from college with a B.A. in English. She now writes full-time and has recently received the Margaret A. Edwards Award for lifetime achievement in writing for young adults. Her other awards include a Newbery Honor, a Coretta Scott King Award, two National Book Award finalist nominations, and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize. Although she spends most of her time writing, Woodson also enjoys reading the works of emerging writers and encouraging young people to write, spending time with her friends and her family, and sewing. Jacqueline Woodson currently resides in Brooklyn, New York.

**Learn more about the author at**  
**[www.JacquelineWoodson.com](http://www.JacquelineWoodson.com)**

“ I used to say I’d be a teacher or a lawyer or a hairdresser when I grew up but even as I said these things, I knew what made me happiest was writing. I wrote on everything and everywhere. ”

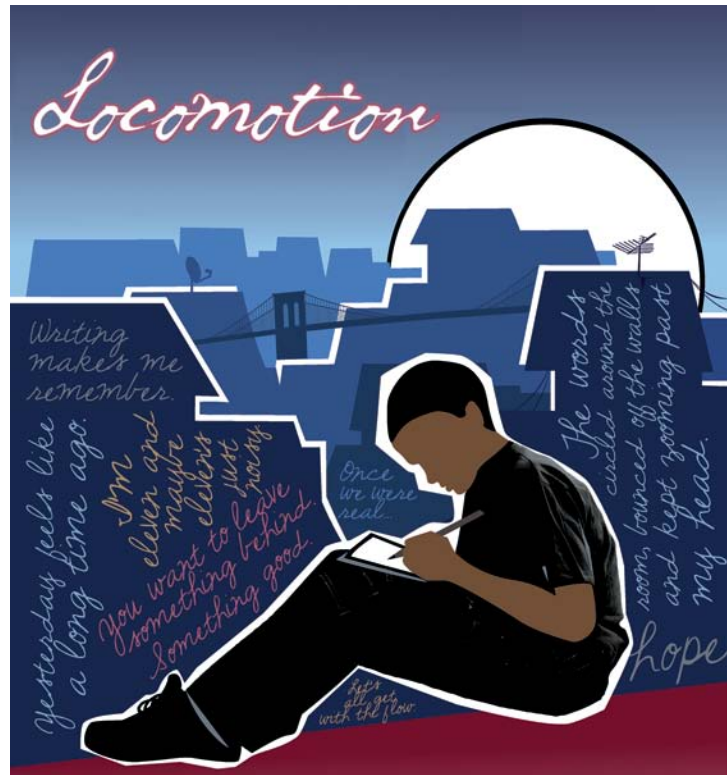
–*Jacqueline Woodson*

## step 1

### READ: LOCOMOTION BY JACQUELINE WOODSON

When Lonnie Collins Motion – better known as Locomotion – was seven years old, his life changed forever. Now his life is about to change again. His teacher is showing him ways to put his feelings on paper. And suddenly Lonnie has a whole new way to tell the world about his life, his little sister, and the fire that changed his family forever.

You'll notice that the book is made up entirely of poems Lonnie writes that tell us about his life and his feelings. As you read, think about how a book of poems tells the story in a different way. How are poems different from prose?



Ever have a lot to say, but can't get the words out? That's the problem confronting Lonnie Collins Motion, a kid who's so full of energy that everybody calls him Locomotion. After experiencing some very real family tragedies, the power of poetry finally provides an outlet for expressing his feelings. Award-winning novelist Jacqueline Woodson has turned her book into an inspiring play about the journey of a boy as he moves from tragedy to hope and from losing one family to gaining a new one. Wonder at this boy's self-discovery through words.



*step 2*

**SOME QUESTIONS TO ANSWER AFTER YOU'VE READ LOCOMOTION**

What is Lonnie's full name, and how did he get his name?

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?

When his friends are trying to outdo one another with tall tales of the strange things they've seen, Lonnie just says, "Never seen nothing." Why doesn't he talk about his family tragedy with his friends? Do you think he should be more open? Can you imagine how you would be in Lonnie's shoes?

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?

Besides learning about all kinds of poems, from haiku to epistle (or letter) poems, what does Lonnie learn about writing from Ms. Marcus?

Imagine Lonnie's life five or ten years after the end of *Locomotion* and make some predictions about his future. Who or what does Lonnie care about? Who are his friends? Does he still write? What kind of person is he?



*step 3*  
**ATTEND THE PLAY, LOCOMOTION**

Before *LOCOMOTION: THE PLAY*, Jacqueline Woodson had never adapted her fiction for the stage. The novel's format provided her with a distinct challenge, since it involves what she calls "both external and internal action." In the play, she says, "the external action plays out traditionally on stage, while Locomotion recites his poetry directly to the audience. That way, I was able to show both of his worlds."

While you watch the play, think about how a stage production differs from a book. Look for your favorite characters, scenes, and events. Consider how the writer handled the change from book to play. What does she mean by "external and internal action"?

**A SIDESTEP:**

Changing a work of art from one form to another is called adaptation. Jacqueline Woodson adapted her book into a play. Try your own hand at adaptation. Create a one act play from a book. You'll have to make decisions about what to keep in and what to leave out. What other challenges did you notice as you worked?



*step 4*  
**CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS**

“Even though I’ve seen sketches and paintings, there’s something about the finished book and the way the illustrations and the words feel like they were always a part of each other,” Jacqueline Woodson told *The Washington Post*. “The same is true of the play—the lights, the staging, the costumes. None of this was my doing, but it all became part of a bigger, better whole in a way that made me really happy.”

How did your experience of watching the play differ from reading the book? Did you feel it became “a bigger, better whole”?

Write a short review of the play. What were the strongest parts? The weakest? Think beyond the performances and review the costumes, staging and music.



*step 5*  
**READING AND WRITING POETRY**

Lonnie's teacher encourages him to express his thoughts and emotions through poetry. Through Lonnie we learn important vocabulary and ideas about composing poems.

The Line Break

*LINE BREAK POEM*

*Ms. Marcus  
says  
line breaks help  
us figure out  
what matters  
to the poet  
Don't jumble your ideas  
Ms. Marcus says  
Every line  
should count.*

*~ Lonnie Collins Motion*

Is Ms. Marcus right? Copy out a paragraph from a favorite book, taking out the punctuation. Now do what Ms. Marcus says. Copy the paragraph again, using line breaks to separate the ideas. Try it several different ways. How do your line breaks change or clarify the meanings of the phrases?

## The List Poem

### LIST POEM

Blue kicks - Pumas  
Blue-and-white Mets shirt  
Mets hat  
A watch my Daddy gave me  
Black pants but not dressy - they got side pockets  
Ten cornrows with zigzag parts like Sprewell's  
A gold chain with a cross on it from Mama - under  
my shirt  
*White socks clean*  
One white undershirt *clean*  
*White underwear clean*  
A dollar seventy-five left pocket  
Two black pens  
A little notebook right pocket  
All my teeth inside my mouth  
One little bit crooked front one  
Brown Eyes  
A little mole by my lip  
Lotion on so I don't look ashy  
Three keys to Miss Edna's house back pocket  
Some words I wanted to remember  
written on my right hand  
Leftie  
Lonnie

~ Lonnie Collins Motion

What does this list of things tell you about Lonnie? How much of a picture of Lonnie do you have in your mind after reading this list? Why does Lonnie put the word "clean" in italics? How does that change the way the word sounds in your mind when you read it? How are the things in Lonnie's pockets important to who he is?

Make a list of things that will give your reader a picture of you. Remember small details - Lonnie doesn't just tell us he has cornrows, he tells us that they zigzag. That will create a complete image.

## The Portrait Poem

A portrait poem is a kind of picture of a person, yourself or someone else, created with words. It's more than a list – it shows the subject in a particular setting or situation to give the reader even more information about the subject. Here's Lonnie's portrait poem of his sister:

*LILI*

*And sometimes I combed Lili's hair  
braids mostly but sometimes a ponytail.  
Lili would cry sometimes  
the kind of crying where no tears came out.  
Big faker.  
I wouldn't've hurt her head for a million dollars.*

*Some days  
like today and yesterday and probably tomorrow  
that's all that's on my mind  
Mama and Lili.*

*Hair and honeysuckle talc powder.*

*~ Lonnie Collins Motion*

Notice where Lonnie breaks the lines. How do his line breaks add meaning to his words?

Notice, too, the visual details Lonnie chooses. Make a list of the visual details Lonnie lets you "see." Do they help you create a "picture" of Lili in your imagination?

Now, create a portrait poem. Choose a subject – someone you know. Make a list of details about that person that will help create a picture for your reader. Then, choose a situation – Lonnie chooses the times when he combed his sister's hair – that tells the reader something about your relationship with that person. Using your list of details, describe the situation in a paragraph. Then, using what you've learned about line breaks, break your lines into a poem, using your break to emphasize your ideas.

*one step further*  
**NOW THAT YOU'RE A POET**

Get to know some other poets. Here's a short list to get you started.

**NIKKI GIOVANNI**

**WALT WHITMAN**

**ROBERT FROST**

**LANGSTON HUGHES**

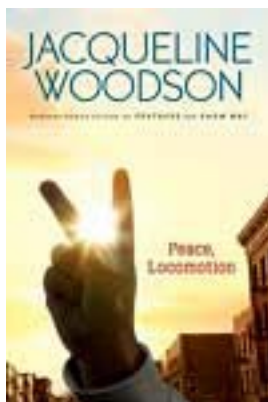
**AMIRI BARAKA**

**BILLY COLLINS**

**RITA DOVE**

**MARY OLIVER**

Find and read the work of one or more of these writers. Notice the similarities among an author's works. Word choices, rhythms, the use of line breaks – every poet has a unique style. Once you get to know your poet's work, try your hand at writing a poem in that writer's style. Share both with your class. Talk about the style choices you noticed and tried to mimic. What about your poet's writing style appealed to you?



**KEEP READING:** PEACE, LOCOMOTION continues the story of Lonnie, now in sixth grade, who writes letters to his beloved little sister, Lili. Read it!

## GREAT RESOURCES FOR BUDDING POETS

### [www.poetryfoundation.org/children](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/children)

Learn how to read poems and poetry with the Learning Lab's annotated poems, discussion questions, poetics essays, and teaching resources.

### [http://www.poetry-online.org/childrens\\_poetry\\_resource\\_index.htm](http://www.poetry-online.org/childrens_poetry_resource_index.htm)

A comprehensive resource for poetry for children.

### [www.favoritepoem.org](http://www.favoritepoem.org)

"Americans saying the poems they love." Check out the video readings and lesson ideas for teachers.

*A Child's Anthology of Poetry* edited by Elizabeth Hauge Sword

*The Everyman Anthology of Poetry for Children* edited by Gillian Avery

*Hip Hop Speaks to Children: A Celebration of Poetry with a Beat* (with CD) edited by Nikki Giovanni

**ASK YOUR LIBRARIAN** for help finding books of poetry!



## THE PARENT REPORT – LOCOMOTION

Take this sheet home and use it to tell your parent what you saw today!

Describe the main character, Lonnie. Talk about the things that have happened in his life. How do you think these things affect his personality?

Who were some of the other characters in the play? Who was your favorite?

What was your favorite scene, or part, of the play? Why was that your favorite?

What did you learn about poetry from this play?

## FEEDBACK FORM

We need your feedback to make our Education Programs even better! Please take a moment to complete this form and either return it to the Sandler Center Education Department at 440 Bank Street Norfolk, VA 23510, fax it to (757) 282-2787 or e-mail your answers to [education@sandlercenter.org](mailto:education@sandlercenter.org).

1. Complete form
2. Attach or include student work (optional)
3. Return both to Sandler Center Education Department by mail, fax, or e-mail.

Education Event: \_\_\_\_\_

(please check)  Matinee     In-School Performance/Master Class

How did your students respond to the performance?

How did you prepare your students for this performance? Did you use the Education Guide? Which activities did you use? Were they helpful? Did students enjoy the materials?

How did this performance contribute to experiential learning in your classroom?

What role do the arts play in your school community? In your classroom?

If you could change one thing about your experience, what would it be?

Please include student work with this form, including letters, artwork, activity responses, and anything inspired by the performance.

(Optional)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be part of our database?  Yes     No



[WWW.SANDLERCENTER.ORG](http://WWW.SANDLERCENTER.ORG)

*upcoming student matinees*

## **SANDLER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS**

**Magic School Bus**

March 22, 2012

10:00 am and Noon

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stamp  
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Norfolk, VA 23510

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**EDUCATION**  
*takes center stage*

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