

## Novel Resource #1- *Locomotion*

*Locomotion*

Jacqueline Woodson

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### About the Author

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Jacqueline Woodson has always been a storyteller. When she was a child, she loved making up stories, or lies, to entertain her friends. This went on until she was in fifth grade, when her teacher told her that her writing was good. Jacqueline realized that, "A lie on the page meant lots of independent time to create your stories and the freedom to sit hunched over the pages of your notebook without people thinking you were strange."

While the critics don't always agree on what to think of her books, many have seen fit to give her awards such as Best Books for Young Adults, the Coretta Scott King Award, and nominations for the National Book Award for several of her books.

Now, Jacqueline is an accomplished author with five middle school titles, nine young adult titles, and seven picture book titles.

- First job was performing in Alaga Syrup advertisements.
- Favorite color is blue.
- Favorite food is pizza.
- Traveled to all fifty states!
- Would love to play in the NBA.

### **Books by Jacqueline Woodson**

*Coming on Home Soon*

*We had a Picnic This Sunday Past*

*The Other Side*

*Sweet, Sweet Memory*

*Our Gracie Aunt*

*Visiting Day*

*Show Way*

*Behind You*

*The Dear One*

*The House You Pass on the Way*

*Lena*

*I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*

*From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun*

*Miracle's Boys*

*If You Come Softly*

*Hush*

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*Feathers*  
*Last Summer with Maizon*  
*Between Madison and Palmetto*

*Locomotion*  
*Maizon at Blue Hill*

### **Locomotion**

Realistic Fiction, Novel in Verse

Lonnie C. Motion has had some tough breaks in his life. But this fall, Lonnie's fifth grade class is learning to write poetry and suddenly, Lonnie is finding the words to tell the world about his family, the fire that took his parents away, his little sister, his world.

**Where it takes place:**

In the Bedford Stuyvesant and Park Slope sections of Brooklyn, NY

**Where I wrote it:**

In Park Slope, Brooklyn.

**Why I wrote it:**

Lonnie's voice was in my head. The poems started coming and the rest...the rest is this book, I guess.

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### **Annotation**

Everything about life seems to be difficult for Lonnie Collins Motion. He is in the fifth grade, still coping with his parents' death from four years prior. Lonnie's parents died in a house fire when he and his sister were out at a sitter's, and now Lonnie and his sister Lili are separated by foster families.

Lonnie's foster mother, Miss Edna, is a woman who seems to control everything. She always tells Lonnie to 'be quiet!' but then tells him that he needs to talk more. She has raised many foster boys and she knows what she is doing. Lili lives with a foster family who doesn't want boys, so Lonnie's hope of being with his sister again deteriorates. Lili, although only eight, encourages Lonnie to find God, and find the hope that will keep them together.

When Lonnie is in the fifth grade, his teacher Ms. Marcus introduces his class to poetry, and to Lonnie's surprise, he is actually a very talented writer. He understands poetry, and his teacher praises him often. In Lonnie's poetry journal is where the reader learns more about his life.

His poems talk about the fire, his sister, and his classmates. Lonnie finally comes to the realization that his life is the way that it is, and overall it is not so bad. He eventually learns to love Miss Edna, and find the hope that Lili is always talking about. The poems are wonderfully written and give the reader an insight into an eleven year old boy's life. This journey that Lonnie goes through help him become more of an adult, and learns lessons that will stick with him forever.

### **Booktalk**

"Ms. Marcus says mostly sonnets are about love  
I think about Mama and Daddy and my sister  
How Mama and Daddy are somewhere up above

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And Lili's just far away enough for me to miss her."

- Sonnet Poem, p. 20

Lonnie Collins Motion (Locomotion) is a boy whose parents died in a house fire four years prior. He had everything- a family who loved each other, a family who worked hard to support one another, and the sense of feeling safe no matter what. Now, Lonnie lives with his foster mother Miss Edna while his younger sister Lili lives a bus ride away with another family. He has just discovered that he is a fantastic poet, and is encouraged by his fifth grade teacher to use poetry to express himself. Through Lonnie's words, you will experience the roller coaster of emotions that Lonnie is going through during the story, and his poems might help you discover more about your own life.

### **Characters**

Lonnie Collins Motion-

- Main Character
- 11 years old
- Thoughtful, quiet

Lili Motion-

- Lonnie's younger sister
- 8 years old
- Religious, quiet

Miss Edna

- Lonnie's foster mother
- Stern, loving, responsible, kind

Ms. Marcus

- Lonnie's fifth grade teacher
- Caring, interested in poetry, loving

Angel, Lamont, Eric

- Lonnie's classmates

### **Conflict**

Throughout the story Lonnie is focused on finding God, coming to grips with his foster mother, and learning how to survive without his sister Lili living with him. His teacher, Ms. Marcus, has taught him that poetry can be a useful tool in expressing feelings.

### **Conflict Resolution**

Lonnie found that poetry helps him to express the things he does not want to say aloud. He learns to deal with his foster mother, Miss Edna, and by the end of the story, they get along well. He comes to the realization that he is not going

to be living with his younger sister, and that is okay. He has found home at Miss Edna's house. He has also found God and learned to believe in a higher power.

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