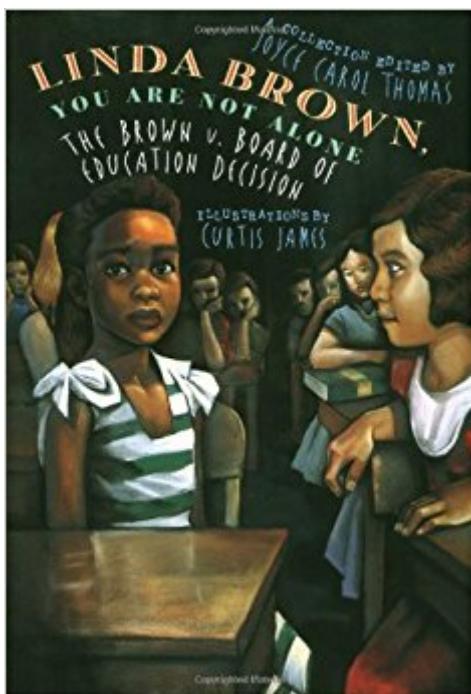


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# Linda Brown, You Are Not Alone: The Brown Vs. Board Of Education Decision



## **Synopsis**

When the Supreme Court decision to desegregate public schools was handed down in 1954, the course of American history was forever changed. Here are personal reflections, stories, and poems from ten of today's most accomplished writers for children, all young people themselves at the time of the Brown v. Board of Education decision. Included are Michael Cart, Jean Craighead George, Eloise Greenfield, Lois Lowry, Katherine Paterson, Ishmael Reed, Jerry Spinelli, Quincy Troupe, Joyce Carol Thomas, and Leona Nicholas Welch. With a compelling introduction by editor Joyce Carol Thomas and stunning pastel artwork by Curtis E. James, this collection celebrates the hard-earned promise of equality in education.

## **Book Information**

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Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Gr. 6-12. Published on the fiftieth anniversary of the Supreme Court's ruling to desegregate public schools, this volume collects stories, memoirs, and poems about the history and impact of Brown v. Board of Education. The contributors, well-known writers for young people, were themselves young in 1954, and they speak from different sides of the racial barrier. Some selections, such as Joyce Carol Thomas' poem "Stormy Weather" and Quincy Troupe's challenging essay "St. Louis," speak powerfully about the searing discrimination that blacks have suffered. Others, such as Jean

Craighead George's "The Awakening," talk about "white blindness": "I was as slow to see this injustice as a bear awakening from hibernation." The illustrated format, featuring arresting pastel images by James, seems geared to younger readers, but some of the entries are fairly sophisticated. Teachers will need to pull out the selections best suited to their students, but all the passages will bring children up close to the complex realities of segregated society, while showing that the ruling was only the first step on a long, continuing road to progress. Gillian EngbergCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

I am a high school librarian, and I purchased this book for one of my English teachers. She said it worked out well for her lesson.

Well, I have had this book for four years, and it is about time I wrote about it, so that I can share its awesomeness with other readers! Award-winning writer, Joyce Carol Thomas, collected and edited essays and poems written at her request by her fellow authors of literature for young people for this small volume in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the 1954 Supreme Court decision, "Brown vs. Board of Education". Although the Court ruled in favor of the plaintive, Rev. Brown, thus allowing his eight year old daughter, Linda Brown, to attend a "white" elementary school in Topeka, Kansas; and made segregation of races illegal in twenty States, there was a long, long road ahead toward integration and better treatment of African Americans within the U.S. This is a beautiful and powerful book befitting to the occasion of remembering what it is like then and how things were, both the good and the bad, between races, back in 1954, and, while looking back, helps us to examine where we are now, and perhaps reflect on what lies ahead. How must it have been for such a small child such as Linda Brown to both symbolically be at the forefront of desegregation of schools and, effectively, our society? She must have been very brave, walking alone and unwanted into that all-white school. Physically she was there with the other children of her age, yet effectively she was very, very alone. Her family wanted her to have a good education and get equal treatment. Up to that point, the schools were arranged according to the principle "separate, but equal", yet this was far from the reality of the situation. The black schools were often in appalling disrepair, the school supplies meager, at best; and, when they received "new" textbooks, they were actually getting the tattered and worn books from the white schools, when they bought new books. Linda Brown, You Are Not Alone shows glimpses into the lives of others, and the nascent forces of the changing times, which show that she is not alone in the fight for desegregation and equal treatment. The thirteen essays and poems (including the introduction) run the gamut both in the experiences as well as

style. There is humor, poignancy, some bitterness, hope, courage and determination. This variety helps keep the reader interested. Two of my favorites were the story, "Wonamona" by Jerry Spinelli, and "Stormy Weather" by the editor, Joyce Carol Thomas. In the former story, Spinelli tells about his wonderful friendship with a neighbor, a same-age black boy whose real name was Reyburn, but who insisted on being called "Wondamona". His friend was a very friendly and gutsy kid, but the young Spinelli was not aware of how special and rare their friendship was, nor did he notice how that Reyburn's mother always had to paint the front door to get rid of the words that appeared there. Eventually Wondamona/Reburn gets his beat-up by an older white kid, and the family moves away. Not before he leaves a final memento of to his best friend, Jerry Spinelli. I was privileged to be at an arts conference in 2004 (QMFA), where I heard Joyce Carol Brown read her very powerful poem, "Stormy Weather", and it still sends shivers up my spine when I read it today. Ms. Brown was a petite lady, very genial and soft-spoken. Yet what power she has when she prays for rain for her ailing mother! I am glad that I bought this book, and that I was there when she spoke. This edition is beautifully done, with high-quality glossy paper and beautiful illustrations by Curtis James. I hope that it becomes available again, and that you enjoy it!

One of the most moving and memorable reading experiences that your child will have is "Linda Brown, You Are Not Alone," edited by the celebrated children's author, Joyce Carol Thomas. Cover-to cover, from the commemorative opening of this volume of stories and the stirring introduction by Ms. Thomas, to the very last story, this is by far one of the best anthologies that has been written for young people. In Jerry Spinelli, Eloise Greenfield, Lois Lowry, Quincy Troupe, Katherine, Joyce Carol Thomas, Michael Cart, Ishmael Reed, Jean Craighead George, Leona Nicholas Welch, you will find some of the finest writing in a single volume. Joyce Carol Thomas has managed to gather together this very fine ensemble of writers and asked them to remember where they were when the Brown vs. Board of Education decision was handed down by the Supreme Court. They have all written stories worth reading over and over again. A full range of emotions, are expressed in these pages-anger, despair, hope, humor, sadness. These writers speak very forthrightly about racism, segregation, and injustice. They speak candidly about their own fears, loss of innocence, and their own hope for the future. They speak about the work that we still have to do as a society to bring full equality to every person. They also speak about our miserable failure at doing so. This is one of the strongest aspects of this collection-that it never condescends to its intended audience. The editor and the writers rightfully expect that their young readers have the maturity and the intellectual capacity to be able to embrace the varied truths and emotions

expressed in this book. A volume like this requires that kind of trust between writer and reader. And, this makes this book one of the very best that I have read. Editor Thomas has brought together the right mix of writers, who with grace and clarity, provide a very unforgettable reading experience for our children. Ms. Thomas' own poem "Stormy Weather" is no exception. It is one of my favorites. And, last but not least, is the exquisite artwork of Curtis James! You'd have to look inside the book to really see how beautiful his work is! Thank all of these writers and illustrator, Curtis James by buying "Linda Brown, You Are Not Alone." Read it to your children. Read it with them. It's a magnificent read for adults, too! It's required reading for all of us.

my family need it , Excellent product, just what I needed for my crusty artisan breads. Best bread product I ever owned, hands down. And at such a reasonable price. very recommend . as description. quickly.

This book is a collection of essays about the Brown decision. It is not the story of Linda Brown that I was hoping for. Current juvenile authors tell of their own experiences during that period. It's interesting.

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