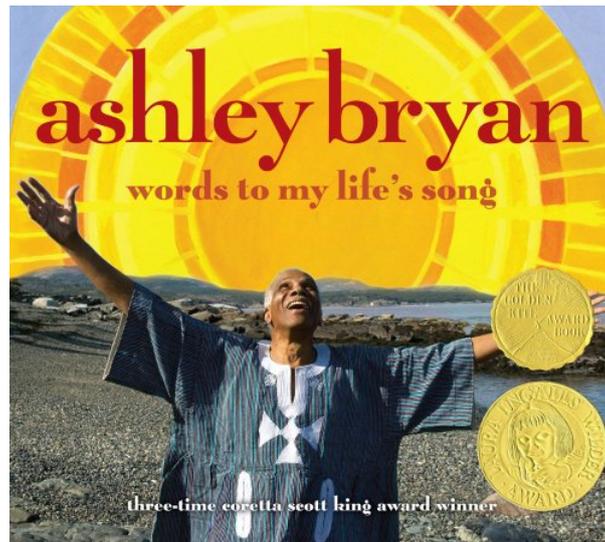
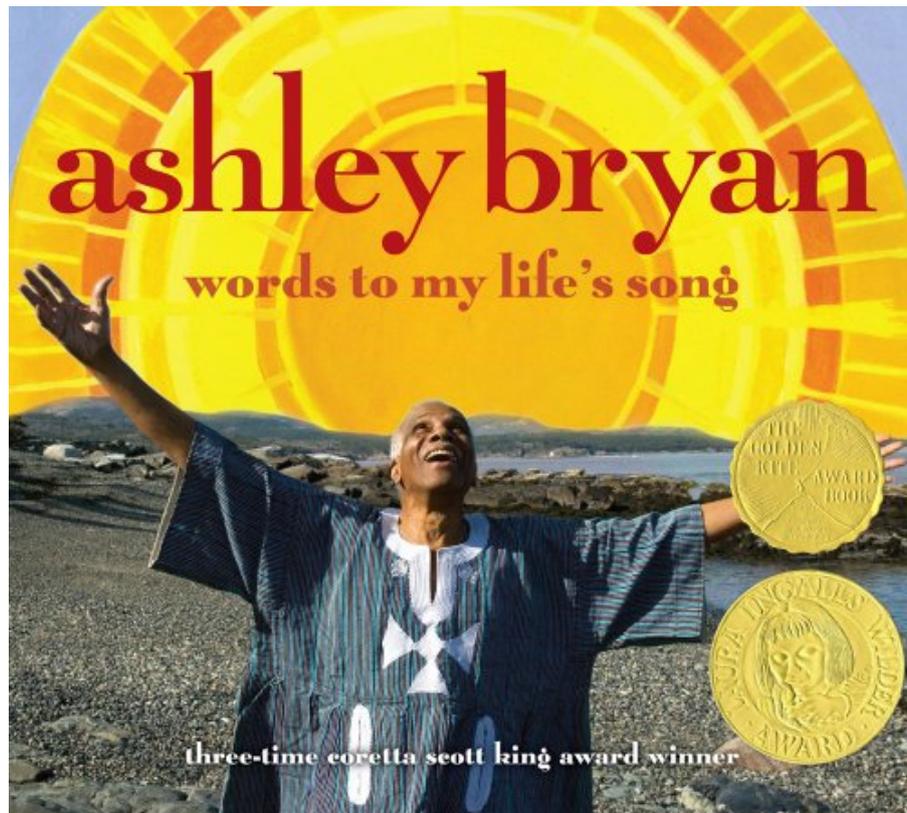


ASHLEY BRYAN: WORDS TO MY LIFE'S SONG BY ASHLEY BRYAN



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From Publishers Weekly

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From School Library Journal

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Ashley's autobiography is full of art, photographs, and the poignant never-say-never tale of his rich life, a life that has always included drawing and painting. Even as a boy growing up during the Depression, he painted -- finding cast off objects to turn into books and kites and toy and art. Even as a soldier in the segregated Army on the beaches of Normandy, he sketched -- keeping charcoal crayons and paper in his gasmask to draw with during lulls. Even as a talented, visionary art student who was accepted and then turned away from college upon arrival, the school telling Ashley that to give a scholarship to an African American student would be a waste, he painted -- continuing to create art when he could have been discouraged, continuing to polish his talents when his spirit should have been beaten. Ashley went on to become a Hans Christian Anderson Award nominee, a May Hill Arbutnot lecturer, and a multiple Coretta Scott King award winner. As you might imagine, his story is powerful, bursting with his creative energy, and a testament to believing in oneself. It's a book every child in America should have access to and it does what the very best autobiographies do; it inspires!

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- Released on: 2009-01-06
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .50" w x 10.00" l, 1.24 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 64 pages

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Most helpful customer reviews

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

Family Life and Creativity

By Isabel Y. Denham

I have just read Ashley Bryan's new autobiography *WORDS FOR MY LIFE SONG*. As a librarian and teacher, as well as mother and grandmother, I have known his work for years. I have heard him lecture and chant poetry. I have known he was a versatile and ever-growing artist. But this book makes clear the kind of seedbed in which he grew. His parents were immigrants from the island of Antigua, who settled in the Bronx. They were creative in their own special ways - his mother with flowers and song; his father with birds. Besides their own six children, they raised various nieces and nephews. They encouraged their children to be creative in whatever way they chose - with music or art. Ashley was drawing and painting from his earliest years. He also gives credit to classes he and his siblings were able to take through the government programs begun in the Depression, such as the WPA. He learned very early to make art with found objects, which he has continued to do throughout his career. Bible stories and a church also played a strong role in his growing up. Because he was so bright and talented, he was able to get scholarships to outstanding educational institutions, though he did come up against some racial walls. When he was drafted into the Army during World War II, he always carried his sketch pad and pencils with him and drew whenever he could. He took art lessons in the countries where he was stationed. He took part in the Normandy invasion but managed to survive the fighting and keep drawing, even in the trenches. After the

war he began to work at illustrating books and continuing his education. He also helped raise his sister's children. We now know him through his illustrations in countless children's books and through his lectures and performances of poetry and song. He has also taught at Dartmouth and other institutions.

From an early stage of his career, he has known Maine as a special place for artists and eventually found his own place on Little Cranberry Island. Part of this book consists of photographs of Bryan living on and celebrating the island.

The total effect of this book is of a family and man just bursting with creativity and sharing it with their fellow creatures. It also gives credit to American institutions which have been instrumental in encouraging talent. It makes the reader proud of what can happen in America when it is at its best.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

You will absolutely fall in love with Ashley Bryan, a kind, gentle and extraordinarily talented man!

By Deb

Ashley's arms are spread wide, welcoming you into his world on Little Cranberry Island, his life, his painting and into his heart. He'll give you a bit of his soul if you read carefully. He grew up in the Bronx surrounded by his three brothers, two sisters, loving parents and a few "extra special" surprise cousins. It was a vibrant home filled with song, dance, games, birds ... it was a nurturing environment for a budding artist. He wasn't born with a brush in his hands, but he should have been.

As a child Ashley was probably unaware of prejudice, but his father experienced the "prevailing discrimination that limited job opportunities for colored people." He later would learn that opportunity had to be chased down and wouldn't come to him if he walked away. He took the entrance exam to Cooper Union School of Art and Engineering, "a school that his art teachers assured him that did "not see [him] there." They never saw his color, but rejoiced in his art and accepted him. In this book you will read the story of a gentle, enormously talented man who has brought his world to you in many books you have read. Ashley invites you to read about his life, a life well spent, one that has given us a new perspective on life.

I loved the gentle flow of the book that conveyed the spirit of a man you will fall in love with and would love to meet, least ways on the pages of his books. His story drifts seamlessly to his past and gives vignettes of his present day life on Cranberry Island. The poetic flow is very appealing. The art, his art, is magnificent and the photographs are very inviting. It is a wonderful world, but you can make it even better by inviting "Ashley Bryan" into yours and onto your book shelves!

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Wonderful insight into Ashley Bryan

By M. Stevens-Becksvoort

I totally agree with Isabel D. whose review is below. Ashley Bryan is one of the most kind and gentle artist/storyteller/poets that I have ever met. At the recent ALA (American Library Association) conference in Washington, DC, he was walking through the vendor floor and graciously took a few moments to chat with me as a librarian from Maine. His readings and artwork convey the joy of words and color that typify Ashley Bryan. I am thankful for knowing, and for having heard, Ashley Bryan.

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