



## A Wreath for Emmett Till

By Marilyn Nelson

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A Coretta Scott King and Printz honor book now in paperback. A Wreath for Emmett Till is "A moving elegy," says The Bulletin.

In 1955 people all over the United States knew that Emmett Louis Till was a fourteen-year-old African American boy lynched for supposedly whistling at a white woman in Mississippi. The brutality of his murder, the open-casket funeral held by his mother, Mamie Till Mobley, and the acquittal of the men tried for the crime drew wide media attention. In a profound and chilling poem, award-winning poet Marilyn Nelson reminds us of the boy whose fate helped spark the civil rights movement.

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## A Wreath for Emmett Till By Marilyn Nelson Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

*Starred Review.* Grade 9 Up—This memorial to the lynched teen is in the Homeric tradition of poet-as-historian. It is a heroic crown of sonnets in Petrarchan rhyme scheme and, as such, is quite formal not only in form but in language. There are 15 poems in the cycle, the last line of one being the first line of the next, and each of the first lines makes up the entirety of the 15th. This chosen formality brings distance and reflection to readers, but also calls attention to the horrifically ugly events. The language is highly figurative in one sonnet, cruelly graphic in the next. The illustrations echo the representative nature of the poetry, using images from nature and taking advantage of the emotional quality of color. There is an introduction by the author, a page about Emmett Till, and literary and poetical footnotes to the sonnets. The artist also gives detailed reasoning behind his choices. This underpinning information makes this a full experience, eminently teachable from several aspects, including historical and literary.—*Cris Riedel, Ellis B. Hyde Elementary School, Dansville, NY*

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From [Booklist](#)

\*Starred Review\* Gr. 9-12. "I was nine years old when Emmett Till was lynched in 1955. His name and history have been a part of most of my life," writes the creator of award-winning *Carver* (2001) in the introduction to this offering--a searing poetry collection about Till's brutal, racially motivated murder. The poems form a heroic crown of sonnets--a sequence in which the last line of one poem becomes the first line of the next. "The strict form became a kind of insulation, a way of protecting myself from the intense pain of the subject matter," writes Nelson. The rigid form distills the words' overwhelming emotion into potent, heart-stopping lines that speak from changing perspectives, including that of a tree. Closing notes offer context to the sophisticated allusions to literature and history, but the raw power of many lines needs no translation. Nelson speaks of human history's deep contradictions: "My country, 'tis both / thy nightmare history and thy grand dream." But there's also the hope that comes from facing the past and moving forward: "In my house, there is still something called grace, / which melts ice shards of hate and makes hearts whole." When matched with Lardy's gripping, spare, symbolic paintings of tree trunks, blood-red roots, and wreaths of thorns, these poems are a powerful achievement that teens and adults will want to discuss together. *Gillian Engberg*

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Review

"These poems are a powerful achievement that teens and adults will want to discuss together." *Booklist*, ALA, Starred Review

"Only Marilyn Nelson can take one of the most hideous events of the 20th century and make of it something glorious: An intricate cycle of 15 sonnets--an Heroic Crown, in which the last sonnet is made up of the previous 14. . . . It's a towering achievement, one whose power and anger and love will make breath catch in the throat and bring tears to the eyes." *Kirkus Reviews*, Starred

"This memorial to the lynched teen is in the Homeric tradition of poet-as-historian. . . . This chosen formality brings distance and reflection to readers, but also calls attention to the horrifically ugly events." *School Library Journal*, Starred

"A moving elegy indeed. . . . Nelson's penetrating elequence ensures that the lyricism marries and draws strength from the structure rather than simply serving it, and the dramatic directness of the address would

make these poems powerful indeed for recitation of readers' theater." The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

"Emmett Till's murder by white racists in 1955 was so brutal that his mother let his tortured body testify to the ugly facts in an open-casket funeral. . . .

The elegant formality of the text, with its subtle power of tone and diction, is accentuated by Lardy's stylized, symbolically abstracted illustrations." Horn Book

"[S]ophisticated poetic form." Book Links January 2008 Book Links, ALA

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Patricia Smith:**

The book untitled A Wreath for Emmett Till is the guide that recommended to you you just read. You can see the quality of the guide content that will be shown to an individual. The language that article author use to explained their ideas are easily to understand. The author was did a lot of analysis when write the book, hence the information that they share to you personally is absolutely accurate. You also could get the e-book of A Wreath for Emmett Till from the publisher to make you much more enjoy free time.

#### **Mariano Smith:**

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#### **Peter Zimmerman:**

Playing with family in a park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try issue that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition associated with. Even you love A Wreath for Emmett Till, you can enjoy both. It is great combination right, you still need to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout men. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its named reading friends.

#### **Donald Rivera:**

Within this era which is the greater individual or who has ability to do something more are more special than other. Do you want to become one among it? It is just simple method to have that. What you need to do is just spending your time very little but quite enough to get a look at some books. One of the books in the top record in your reading list is usually A Wreath for Emmett Till. This book that is certainly qualified as The Hungry Hillside can get you closer in becoming precious person. By looking upward and review this guide you can get many advantages.

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