

**Ashley Bryan**

**Ashley Bryan illustrated Pat Mora’s poem, “Bookjoy Around the World,” for the 2013 International Children’s Book Day poster. The artist shares that he designed brightly animated images in order to infuse a spirit of play that could be appreciated by everyone.**

**Ashley Bryan will also be a featured speaker at the 10<sup>th</sup> Regional IBBY Conference in 2013.**

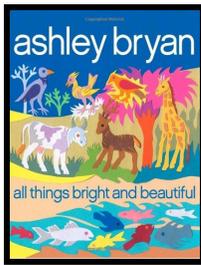
Ashley Bryan is an artist, storyteller, poet, musician, and teacher. He was born and raised in New York City in a home filled with music, art, and books. After a childhood spent drawing and painting, Bryan studied art at the Cooper Union Art School and philosophy at Columbia University. In a video on his official publisher’s page, the artist shares that his biggest pet peeve is when people give up in the face of a creative or constructive challenge.

At the heart of Ashley Bryan’s bookmaking is the feeling of a handmade book; he shares that he designs his books to be one-of-a-kind treasures for readers. To this day, the book that Ashley Bryan is most proud of happens to be the very first book he made in Kindergarten. His illustrated ABC book garnered rave reviews from family members and started him on his lifelong journey as an artist. A celebration of art, community, and nature, Ashley Bryan’s books feature African proverbs and folktales, Spirituals and hymns, and African American poetry.

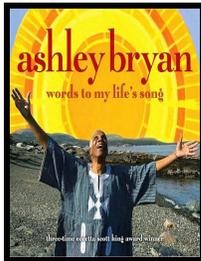
The first African American to publish a children’s book as both author and illustrator, Ashley Bryan didn’t publish his first book until his 40’s. A children’s book editor visited his art studio in the Bronx, and she was so impressed that she offered him a contract to illustrate children’s books. The esteemed artist has received many prestigious awards, such as the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award, the May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture, and the Coretta Scott King-Virginia Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award. In addition, Ashley Bryan has won numerous Coretta Scott King Illustrator awards and honors for his books.

The artist lives on Little Cranberry Island off the coast of Maine where he paints, makes puppets from objects found on the island beaches, and creates stained glass panels from scavenged sea glass. He still travels around the world telling stories, performing poetry, giving puppet shows, and inspiring children to make art and music a part of their growing lives. Last year the school on the island where he lives changed its name to The Ashley Bryan School to honor the beloved artist.

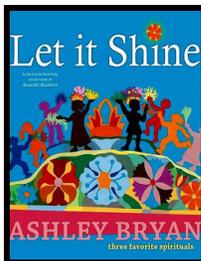
### **Selected Bibliography**



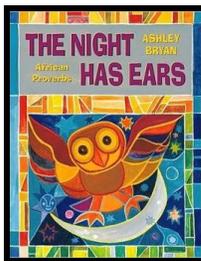
*All Things Bright and Beautiful* (2010). Ashley Bryan used his mother's embroidery scissors to cut the colored paper for his collage illustrations of Cecil F. Alexander's famous hymn.



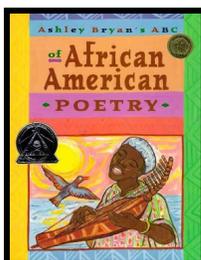
*Ashley Bryan: Words to My Life's Song* (2009). Winner of the Golden Kite Award for Nonfiction and a Parents' Choice Gold Medal, Ashley Bryan's autobiography shares his lifetime devotion to artistic creation. Utilizing a scrapbook-style page design overflowing with photographs and art, this book is inspiring to readers and artists alike.



*Let it Shine: Three Favorite Spirituals* (2007). Ashley Bryan grew up to the sound of his mother singing, and in this illustrated collection of three favorite Spirituals, he shares the joy of song with readers. The book, for which he won the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award, is illustrated using construction paper collage and concludes with a note about the history of the Spiritual.



*The Night has Ears* (1999). Raised in a household of proverbs; Ashley Bryan's mother had a proverb to share for "any situation, attitude, or event." Using his signature tempera and gouache paintings, the artist has collected and illustrated 26 African American proverbs from various traditions.



*Ashley Bryan's ABC of African American Poetry* (1997). A collection of inspiring excerpts from poems by celebrated African American poets, this uniquely designed alphabet book takes each featured letter from a word contained in the corresponding poem. Ashley Bryan won a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Award for the tempera and gouache paintings in his innovative alphabet book.

### Links of Interest

- <http://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/bryan/>  
Reading Rockets: Video Interview
- [http://www.teachingbooks.net/content/interviews/Bryan\\_qu.pdf](http://www.teachingbooks.net/content/interviews/Bryan_qu.pdf)  
TeachingBooks.net: Author Program In-depth Interview

- <http://authors.simonandschuster.com/Ashley-Bryan/706174>  
Ashley Bryan's Official Simon & Schuster Publisher Page (Includes five short videos)
- <http://nccil.org/experience/artists/bryana/index.htm>  
Exhibition for Rent: "Rhythms of the Heart: The Illustration of Ashley Bryan"
- <http://islesfordschool.blogspot.com/2012/03/introducing-ashley-bryan-school.html>  
The Ashley Bryan School Blog
- <http://www.hbook.com/2012/06/news/awards/coretta-scott-king-virginia-hamilton-award-for-lifetime-achievement-acceptance/>  
Coretta Scott King–Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement Acceptance Speech

**Ashley Bryan is a member of USBBY. Why not join him?**



This featured author profile was prepared by Lisa Patrick, February 2013.