

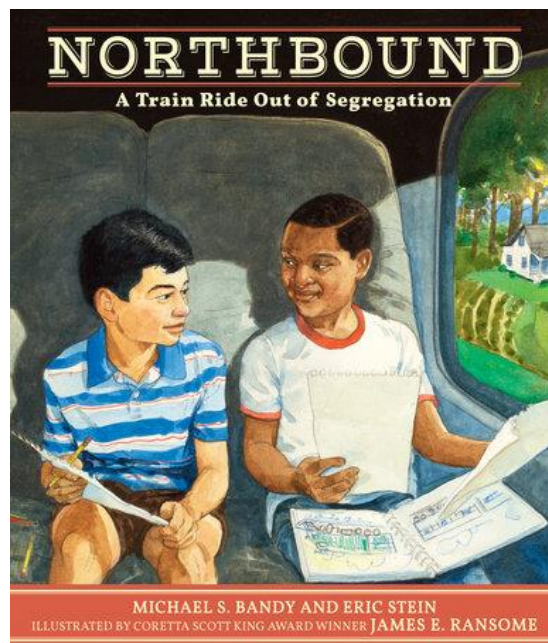
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JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE & LITERACY EDUCATION

## **Review of *Northbound: A Train Ride Out of Segregation*** Written by Michael S. Bandy & Eric Stein, Illustrated by James E. Ransome

**Adult/Educator Reviewer:** Angie Foster  
Parent, Newton, NC

**Student Reviewer:** Will Foster, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, 10 Years Old



Bandy, M. S., & Stein, E. (2020). *Northbound: A train ride out of segregation*. Candlewick Press.

ISBN: 9780763696504

### Adult Review: Angie Foster

*Northbound: A Train Ride Out of Segregation* is the third book in a trilogy, but wonderful as a stand-alone book. It is a captivating story about a friendship between two young boys that surpasses racial injustices and divisions beyond their control. The story begins with young Michael and his Granddaddy working at their home, watching a train, and Michael dreaming of riding the train. Michael then learns that he will be traveling with his Grandmother via train to visit family. We experience his initial excitement of arriving at the station, moving fast, and speeding through tunnels. Then, Michael wants to explore the train but is limited due to a sign that requires him to stay in the “colored only” section. He can see a White boy through the glass, but isn’t allowed to visit him due to the rules. However, when the train arrives in Atlanta, GA the sign changes and he is able to meet the boy, Bobby Ray. The boys become fast friends and have a wonderful time exploring the train and playing together. They even learn that they live in the same town but have never met due to segregated schools. When the train arrives in Chattanooga, TN Michael is ushered back to the “colored only” section and both boys are sad to be separated. Bobby Ray is able to send a note with Michael. Both boys are confused by the inconsistent and mixed messages of the rules. The book ends with Michael opening the letter from Bobby Ray and finding a message of hope and kindness. Ultimately, the book offers hopefulness while describing a dark and painful era.

The large watercolor illustrations of this book are beautiful. The vibrant images will have readers pausing on every page to study the detail. The pictures alone tell the story and the facial expressions capture the emotions of the journey.

This book was selected and reviewed as a method of teaching young children about the history of segregation in our country and the personal impact it created. I feel that this book would not only help with the understanding of history, but offers a situation that a child could relate to and recognize the impact of racism. It also offers a good example of mixed messages which can be difficult for children and even adults to understand. The endnote provides explanation of the 1887 Interstate Commerce Act and why the rules changed from state to state.

### Student Review: Will Foster, 5<sup>th</sup> Grader, 10 Years Old

I thought this book was important because it talks about segregation and how bad it was. I would recommend this book because it really makes you think deeply about the concept of segregation and how it made people feel. Teachers and students would enjoy this good book because it teaches about things that have happened in the past and why they were bad. The thing I like best is the illustrations and the way the book is written. It is a well-written book.