

## BOOK CLUB NEWS

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### ***Another Brooklyn*, by Jacqueline Woodson**



Discussion Leader: Ann Kepcke

Absent from this discussion, I enjoyed a family wedding of two close-to-social security very happy people who punctuated their vows with kisses, speaking to each other from the heart under a *chuppa* on a working farm in Oregon. This write-up is a collage of notes provided by Ann, Don, and Loren, with some personal observations of my own.

Jacqueline Woodson, born 1963, is an award-winning author of children's books who was raised in Greenville, South Carolina and Brooklyn, New York. Following her dream to write, Woodson brings the unique perspective of a Black Lesbian parent growing up in the turbulent times of racial tension and civil rights activism to writing about communities, girls, danger, joy, family, and through writing, changing the world. I encourage you to look further into her life and insights on life. Here is one example, an NPR Fresh Air August 9, 2016, interview with the author: <http://www.npr.org/2016/08/09/489311892/jacqueline-woodsons-brooklyn-is-full-of-dreams-and-danger>.

What is the meaning of the books title? Brooklyn of the 70's -90's of the dedication? The secret Brooklyn of childhood? White people moving out to Another Brooklyn? Two Brooklyns: the hopeful veneer of girlhood; another dark and dangerous? When childhood gives way to adulthood? A Brooklyn far away

from the million dollar brownstones of today's Brooklyn? Ann encouraged discussion from significant quotes: "Everywhere we looked, we saw the people trying to dream themselves out. As though there was someplace other than this place. As though there was another Brooklyn." "I know how that what is tragic isn't the moment. It is the memory." "I had Sylvia, Angela, and Gigi, the four of us sharing the weight of growing up *Girl* in Brooklyn, as though it was a bag of stones we passed among ourselves saying, *Here. Help me carry this.*" "Keep your arm out, she said. And keep women a whole other hand away from the furthest tips of your fingernails." (Is this a clue as to the appeal of long fingernails?) "August turns the trauma of losing her mother and uncle into a career of studying various cultures' rituals of death."

What is the role of the elevated perspective? Of memory? Of dreams? Of closure? Is this story autobiographical? Of home? Of community? Of friendship? Of secrets? Is this story uniquely feminine? How does the style express memory? What, if any, is the significance of the name of the main character August?

Readers enjoyed this read. Heartwarming. I could relate. I loved the poetic prose. I enjoyed the perspective that everything becomes memory. I enjoyed the economical writing: a lot of information in a small space. I enjoyed what was said and what was not said: "For a long time my mother was not dead yet." There are no intermissions in life. This story made me ponder fiction vs memoir and living inside our back stories.

Thank you, Ann, for your leadership and for sharing your birthday cupcakes. Happy Birthday! Join us October 20, 2017, for our discussion of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, by Mark Twain led by Ginger Semple-Schneider. Happy reading!

