

[PDF] Obama: Only In America

**Carole Boston Weatherford, Robert T. Barrett - pdf
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Books Details:

Title: Obama: Only in America
Author: Carole Boston Weatherford, R
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Description:

From School Library Journal Grade 4-6—This "biographical tribute" traces Obama from his birth on August 4, 1961, to Inauguration Day 2009. Facts about his upbringing, family, self-doubt, education, and political career are presented in a conversational style set on the page as free verse. Serious topics like racial identity, experimentation with drugs and alcohol, and the death of his father are touched on. A quote from one of his speeches appears in red type below the main text. The opposite page features oil paintings on canvas done in a muted palette that adds a dated feel to the work. Overall, the format seems wrong for the text. If a picture book is desired, Nikki Grimes's *Barack Obama: Son of Promise, Child of Hope* (S & S, 2008) may be a better fit, and Garen Thomas's *Yes We Can* (Feiwel & Friends, 2009) fills the bill as straight biography.—*Stacy Dillon, LREI, New York City*

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From Some will call this picture book for older readers adulatory—and it is—but Weatherford puts an amazing amount of information about Barack Obama into a rhythmic text that is also wonderfully concise. Most of the major moments of Obama’s life are here, both personal and professional. Beginning with the unlikely pairing of his parents; through his time in Indonesia (“There, beggars knocked on the door and crocodiles sunned in the yard”); to his decisions to become, first, a community organizer, then a politician, the book makes Obama seem both larger than life yet also someone beset with struggles with which readers can identify. He is shown longing for his father, at times lazy in his studies, unsure of his racial identity. His flirtation with drugs is mentioned obliquely: “He . . . stopped getting high.” Barrett’s illustrations, oils on canvas, add a soft focus to the events. Depictions of Obama himself vary in quality from page to page, but they capture a man of many parts. The snippets from speeches that adorn each spread deepen the perspective. Grades 3-5.
--Ilene Cooper

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