

## Teacher's Guide

### *Thanks a Million*

written by Nikki Grimes

illustrated by Cozbi A. Cabrera

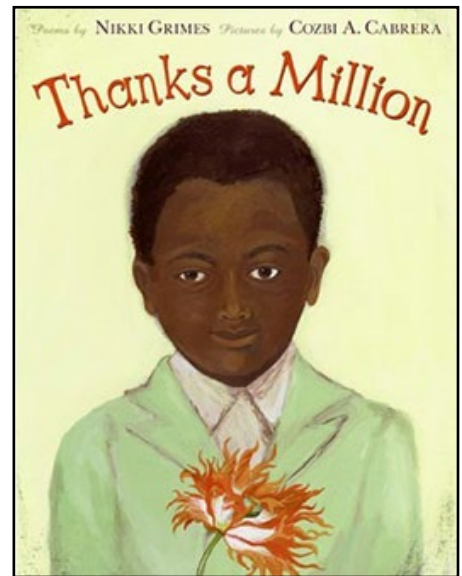
Greenwillow / Amistad, 2006

#### About the book

What makes you thankful? A book? Weekends? Your family? How do you say Thanks? In sixteen extraordinary poems that range in form from a haiku to a rebus to a riddle, Nikki Grimes reminds us how wonderful it is to feel thankful and how powerful a simple "thank you" can be.

#### About the author

Nikki Grimes began penning poetry at the age of six. Her many award-winning titles include the picture books *Talkin' About Bessie* and *Meet Danitra Brown*, both Coretta Scott King Honor Books. Another Coretta Scott King Honor went to her novel *Jazmin's Notebook*, and her novel *Bronx Masquerade* won the Coretta Scott King Author Award. Nikki Grimes is thankful for many things, her faith and poetry chief among them. She lives in Corona, California.



#### Author Interview

1. What inspired this book about thankfulness?
2. What are you most thankful for?
3. Can you share a bit about your process for this book?
4. What poets have most influenced your work?
5. What advice would you give to young poets?

#### Pre-reading Activity

What does it mean to be thankful? How do you show you are grateful for what you have? Who are you glad is a part of your life? Do they know? How might you tell them?

#### Questions to consider

1. What is the metaphor in the poem "Reward?"
2. Who is writing the poem "Dear Teacher?"
3. In "Shoe Surprise" what does the boy realize?
4. How do deaf children say thank you?
5. What did the brother forget in the poem "Unspoken"? How does he show he's grateful?

## Discussion Guide

1. What are you most grateful for in the world? Who are you most thankful for? How do you tell someone? How can you show someone? Which is more powerful, showing or telling? Why?
2. Which poem is your favorite in the collection? Why? What did it make you think of in your own life? How is your world similar? How is it different? What did you learn?
3. What did the teacher do for the student in “Dear Teacher?” What did the student, in return, do for her? Do you think this was a good trade? What can kids do to show an adult they appreciate them? What would a parent like? What about a teacher?
4. In the poem “The Lunchroom” why is the narrator nervous? Have you ever felt like him? What is he grateful for at the end? How does he show it? Can you welcome a new friend too? What might you do?
5. What does the narrator do for her mom in “Lunch Box Love Notes”? Why is it difficult for her? How does her mom show her appreciation? How do little children show you they are happy?
6. What things are you thankful to do on weekends like the narrator of the same poem? What is your favorite thing about weekends? What activities do you do? What foods do you eat? Where do you go? Are you grateful for each?
7. How does the boy in “Shoe Surprise” show his gratitude toward his father? Why does he decide to do it? How can you show a parent you’re grateful?
8. How can a book offer understanding? Have you ever felt like “crawl [ing] between the pages of that novel and hide[ing] for hours”? What book has affected you like this? Did you ever write the author and tell them so?
9. What is a shelter? Why do some families end up staying in them? What is the child wishing for? What is she still grateful for? How can you help? How can you show your own gratefulness for the place you call home?
10. What holiday is being celebrated in the final poem? How can we show our thanks throughout the year? What are you most grateful for?