PDF | Sing, Unburied, Sing: A Novel

by Jesmyn Ward
The heart of Jesmyn Ward’s *Sing, Unburied, Sing* is story—the yearning for a narrative to help us understand ourselves, the pain of the gaps we’ll never fill, the truths that are failed by words and must be translated through ritual and song...Ward’s writing throbs with life, grief, and love, and this book is the kind that makes you ache to return to it.” — *Buzzfeed*

In Jesmyn Ward’s first novel since her National Book Award–winning *Salvage the Bones*, this singular American writer brings the archetypal road novel into rural twenty-first-century America. An intimate portrait of a family and an epic tale of hope and struggle, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* journeys through Mississippi’s past and present, examining the ugly truths at the heart of the American story and the power—and limitations—of family bonds.

Jojo is thirteen years old and trying to understand what it means to be a man. He doesn’t lack in fathers to study, chief among them his Black grandfather, Pop. But there are other men who complicate his understanding: his absent White father, Michael, who is being released from prison; his absent White grandfather, Big Joseph, who won’t
acknowledge his existence; and the memories of his dead uncle, Given, who died as a teenager.

His mother, Leonie, is an inconsistent presence in his and his toddler sister’s lives. She is an imperfect mother in constant conflict with herself and those around her. She is Black and her children’s father is White. She wants to be a better mother but can’t put her children above her own needs, especially her drug use. Simultaneously tormented and comforted by visions of her dead brother, which only come to her when she’s high, Leonie is embattled in ways that reflect the brutal reality of her circumstances.

When the children’s father is released from prison, Leonie packs her kids and a friend into her car and drives north to the heart of Mississippi and Parchman Farm, the State Penitentiary. At Parchman, there is another thirteen-year-old boy, the ghost of a dead inmate who carries all of the ugly history of the South with him in his wandering. He too has something to teach Jojo about fathers and sons, about legacies, about violence, about love.

Rich with Ward’s distinctive, lyrical language, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* is a majestic new work and an unforgettable family story.

**Amazon.com Review**

*An Amazon Best Book of September 2017*: A slamming, heartbreaker of a novel that is rendered with such stinging beauty and restrained emotion that despite the anguish taking place on the page, you won’t want it to end. For her third novel, National Book Award winning Jesmyn Ward, tells the story of Jojo, a young black Mississippi boy raised by his grandparents, who is forced to become a man far before he should because his mother is a drug addict, his father is in jail, and his baby sister needs a guardian. When Jojo’s dad is released from prison, Leonie packs Jojo and Kayla in the car, picks up her meth addled friend and drives north. What transpires is a nightmarish journey that weaves in and out of the present – Leonie’s meth induced highs, when she dreams of her dead brother who was killed by white hands decades ago, and the past -- when a man named Ritchie served time alongside Jojo’s grandfather. *Sing, Unburied, Sing* shimmers with mythic southern memories to tell a story of the drugged and the damned and the fluttering promise of youth. — *Al Woodworth*

**Product Description**

*WINNER of the NATIONAL BOOK AWARD for FICTION
*A TIME MAGAZINE BEST NOVEL OF THE YEAR and A NEW YORK TIMES TOP 10 OF 2017
*Finalist for the Kirkus Prize
*Finalist for the Andrew Carnegie Medal
*Publishers Weekly Top 10 of 2017
*Finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award

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