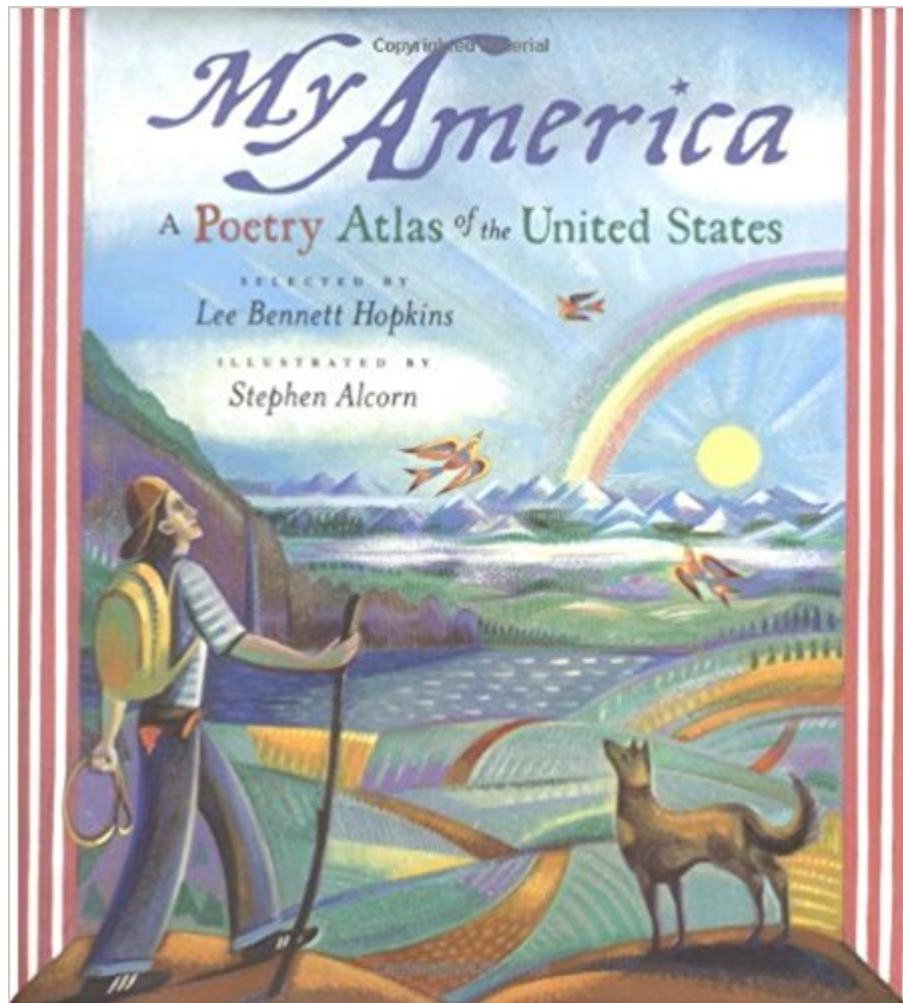




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# My America: A Poetry Atlas Of The United States



## Synopsis

In *My America*, Lee Bennett Hopkins weaves together fifty poems -- grouped by geographic region -- to create a remarkable portrait of the United States. Here is America in all its stunning variety, from the dramatic seacoast of the Northeast and the rippling cornfields of the Plains States to the shimmering deserts of the Southwest and the majestic redwood forests of the Pacific Coast. But here, too, are the ties that bind this nation together -- the hopes and dreams of those who live in our cities and towns and on farms. The voices of beloved poets like Langston Hughes, Carl Sandburg, Nikki Giovanni, and Lilian Moore blend with new voices to sing not just of landmarks like the Mississippi River, the Grand Canyon, and the Everglades, but of daily life across the land. Complementing these personal, moving visions of America are maps of the regions and fascinating facts for each state. Stephen Alcorn's brilliant, textured artwork makes this book a feast for the eyes as well as for the imagination. Impressive for its breadth, depth, and beauty, *My America* is a volume readers will savor as they read it time and time again. It is fitting homage to our wideranging, ever-changing land.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 6

## Customer Reviews

Grade 3-8-Seven regions plus Washington, DC, are explored through 51 poems by 40 different poets. The selections explore each area's geography, climate, or urban or rural features. Classic

poets such as Langston Hughes, Carl Sandburg, and Nikki Giovanni are represented along with David McCord, X. J. Kennedy, Myra Cohn Livingston, and Hopkins himself. Twenty poems were commissioned especially for the book. Alcorn's paintings reflect the emotional range of the poems through a variety of styles and images. The artist expresses the diversity of American geography using shape, colors, and texture to evoke a variety of landscapes and including people from many cultural backgrounds. Each section is preceded by a painted map of the region and brief lists of facts, including a "Great Fact" for each state. Previous collections of poetry about America have taken chronological, thematic, or biographical approaches. This regional arrangement invites connections to literature set in the places presented. When used along with Nora Panzer's *Celebrate America in Poetry and Art* (Hyperion, 1999) and Hopkins's *Hand in Hand: An American History through Poetry* (S & S, 1994) and *Lives: Poems about Famous Americans* (HarperCollins, 1999), this volume will enrich literature and social-studies units. Barbara Chatton, College of Education, University of Wyoming, Laramie Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Reviewed with Bobbi Katz's *We the People*. These two large-size poetry anthologies will get lots of use across the curriculum--in history, civics, literature, and American Studies classes. Katz has steeped herself in the diaries, letters, journals, and biographies of famous leaders and ordinary people through U.S. history and written more than 60 first-person poems in their individual voices. The collection, arranged in chronological order, includes Chief Powhatan's "Message for the Settlers," a Yukon gold miner's tale, and kids' e-mail messages to President Clinton on the edge of the twenty-first century. Immediate and colloquial, sometimes wry, sometimes solemn, the poems work well as dramatic monologues, whether it's Orville and Wilbur Wright telling the "First Airplane" in two voices, Roosevelt on the New Deal ("The people are no mob to me. I have met them face to face"), or a Japanese American child on being interned during World War II. Nina Crews uses archival images and photographs in three collages to express a sense of past and present. Hopkins' organization is geographical. He divides the U.S. into eight regions. For each, he includes a map, a page of facts about the states, and seven or eight poems. Even the selections from the famous, such as Langston Hughes and Carl Sandburg, are not the usual familiar choices, and several poems were specially commissioned for the anthology. Some poems are purposive, but the best (including X. J. Kennedy's "Boulder, Colorado," Nikki Giovanni's "Knoxville, Tennessee," Ruth Lechlitner's poem about "This Kansas boy who never saw the sea," and several by Hopkins himself) capture places and people in all their diversity. Stephen Alcorn's handsome, multitextured pictures are sometimes overwhelming, but they avoid literal interpretation and capture the sweep of the land

and the rhythm of the words. Hazel RochmanCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

I am very torn about this book. Some of the poems I loved and some of the artwork I loved BUT other artwork I did not like at all or even came off scary and worse still some of the poems were boring, did not create any emotional connection to the piece, and st times were in my opinion terrible. Then the info on the states etc. is redundant and frankly should have been left out of the book. The poetry included should have revealed the places to the reader, not through some fact cards for each state. If you replaced those fact lists with a story to read of that area with vivid descriptions... that would have been a greater quality. Also, the book is way to short to really express each location and surely there was more poetry that could have been included. In the end, I am going to return the book.

I wanted this book to tie in some poetry with United States regions my fourth graders are studying. I haven't really found ONE that I can use in a meaningful way. The cover is pretty. The fact cards are nice but the same information that is readily available everywhere. I would not buy this book new. Perhaps a bargain if you can find it used and are able to glean a poem or two out of it. I am disappointed.

Superb anthology of children's poetry, beautifully illustrated - a literary road trip! Lee Bennett Hopkins, with his impeccable standards of quality and taste, has gathered together an array of poems that truly celebrates the range of our nation. A delightful presentation of the country's geography.

Good poems that teach about various regions of the country. We are using this in conjunction with the Moving Beyond the Page unit on poetry.

A wonderful trip across the country by means of poetry and fact boxes, with great illustrations to accompany you on your trip!

My kids enjoyed these poems as part of their homeschool program.

Great!

I rate this a five. My students rate it a 4. It is just a nice way to incorporate one more literary genre into the day.

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