

LORGNETTE

Quarterly Review of Children's and Young Adults' Books

Author

Barlow, Charnelle Pinkney

Illustrator

Illustrated by the author

Reviewer

Baker, Laura

Pages

Unpaged

Price

\$18.99

ISBN

978-0-593-57106-4

Publisher & Date

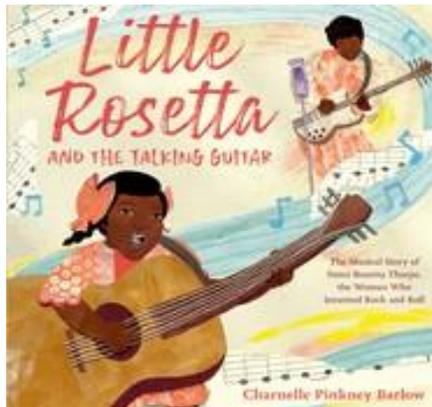
Doubleday, 2023

Classification

Nonfiction (787.871 or biography)

Grade Level

1-3

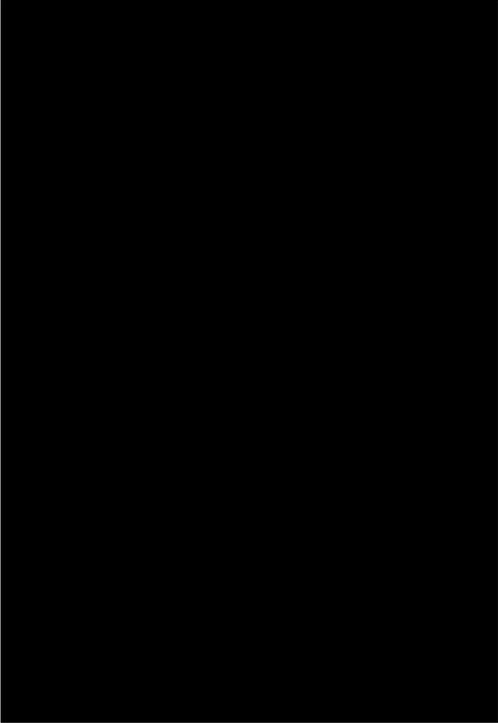


Book Review: LITTLE ROSETTA AND THE TALKING GUITAR: THE MUSICAL STORY OF SISTER ROSETTA THARPE, THE WOMAN WHO INVENTED ROCK AND ROLL

Sister Rosetta Tharpe, known as "the woman who invented rock and roll," is a woman who changed music history. This is the story of her very early childhood, how she loved music, and how she embraced the guitar as her way to express the sounds around her. Little Rosetta grew up with a mother who played the mandolin, and Rosetta would dance and sing as the music flowed. Her mother gave her a guitar when Rosetta was four years old, and Rosetta would take it everywhere in their small town. Most of the text is devoted to how she was inspired by the rhythms of life in the town: the whirl of a neighbor's sewing machine, the clank of pots and pans at the town's cafe, and the buzz of a crowded market. Gradually her unschooled strumming took form, producing notes and rhythms that grew into songs that she proudly played at the church's anniversary service when she was six years old. These early sounds became the basis of a new genre of music called rock and roll.

Charnelle Pinkney Barlow is a third-generation author-illustrator. Her





grandfather was the acclaimed Jerry Pinkney, who won numerous awards for his children's book illustrations. The talent runs in the family with Charnelle carrying on the high standards. She uses warm colors and very unique textures in her art, often incorporating fragments of actual sheet music in the composition. The text joyfully conveys Tharpe's early love of music, generously using rich metaphors and imagery to show how the music felt.

An Author's Note explains that Tharpe's influence was likely overshadowed because she was a Black women guitarist in a music industry dominated by men, but that she was later recognized and inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as more musicians credited her with influencing their own musical style. Cheers to Charnelle Pinkney Barlow for sharing a story of an important yet lesser-known musician, for telling it with inspiration, and for carrying on a wonderful artistic tradition.

