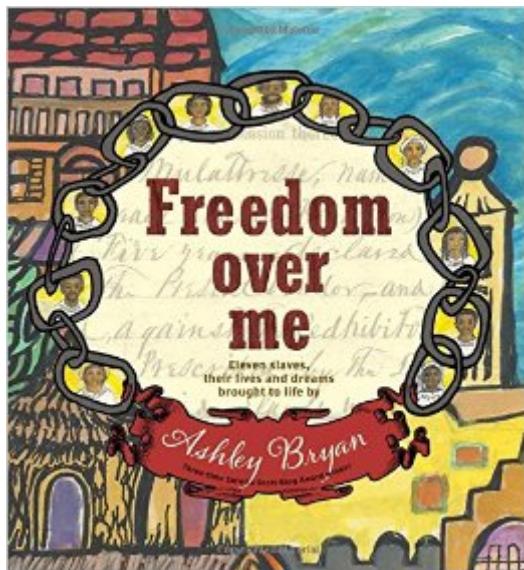


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# Freedom Over Me: Eleven Slaves, Their Lives And Dreams Brought To Life By Ashley Bryan



## **Synopsis**

Using original slave auction and plantation estate documents, Ashley Bryan offers a moving and powerful picture book that contrasts the monetary value of a slave with the priceless value of life experiences and dreams that a slave owner could never take away. Imagine being looked up and down and being valued as less than chair. Less than an ox. Less than a dress. Maybe about the same as a lantern. You, an object. An object to sell. In his gentle yet deeply powerful way, Ashley Bryan goes to the heart of how a slave is given a monetary value by the slave owner, tempering this with the one thing that CAN'T be bought or sold—“dreams. Inspired by the actual will of a plantation owner that lists the worth of each and every one of his coworkers, Bryan has created collages around that document, and others like it. Through fierce paintings and expansive poetry he imagines and interprets each person’s life on the plantation, as well as the life their owner knew nothing about—“their dreams and pride in knowing that they were worth far more than an Overseer or Madam ever would guess. Visually epic, and never before done, this stunning picture book is unlike anything you’ve seen.

## **Book Information**

Hardcover: 56 pages

Publisher: Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books (September 13, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1481456903

ISBN-13: 978-1481456906

Product Dimensions: 10 x 0.4 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars (See all reviews) (3 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,935 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Africa #5 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism #6 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > African-American

Age Range: 6 - 10 years

Grade Level: 4 - 6

## **Customer Reviews**

Who gives voice to the voiceless? What are your credentials when you do so? When I was a teen I used to go into antique stores and buy old family photographs from the turn of the century. It still

seems odd to me that this is allowed. I'd find the people who looked the most interesting, like they had a story to tell, and I'd take them home with me. Then I'd write something about their story, though mostly I just liked to look at them. There is a strange comfort in looking at the faces of the fashionable dead. A little twinge of *momento mori* mixed with the knowledge that you yourself are young (possibly) and alive (probably). It's easy to hypothesize about a life when you can see that person's face and watch them in their middle class Sunday best. It is far more difficult when you have no face, a hint of a name, and/or maybe just an age. Add to this the idea that the people in question lived through a man made hell-on-earth. When author/illustrator/artist Ashley Bryan acquired a collection of slave-related documents from the 1820s to the 1860s he had in his hands a wealth of untold stories. And when he chose to give these people, swallowed by history, lives and dignity and peace, he did so as only he could. With the light and laughter and beauty that only he could find in the depths of uncommon pain. *Freedom Over Me* is a work of bravery and sense. A way of dealing with the unimaginable, allowing kids an understanding that there is a brain, heart, and soul behind every body, alive or dead, in human history. The date on the Fairchilds Appraisement is July 5, 1828. On it you will find a list of goods to be sold. Cows, hogs, cotton . . . and people. Eleven people, if we're going to be precise (and we are). Most have names. One does not. Just names on a piece of paper almost 200-years-old.

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