



## Jubilee Journey

*By Assistant Professor Department of Professional Communication  
Carolyn Meyer*

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**Jubilee Journey** By Assistant Professor Department of Professional Communication Carolyn Meyer

Emily Rose has always felt comfortable growing up in Connecticut with her African-American mother and her French American father, but when they spend some time with her great-grandmother in Texas, Emily Rose learns about her black heritage and uncovers some new and exciting parts of her own identity.

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### **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### From School Library Journal

Grade 5-9?This sequel to *White Lilacs* (Harcourt, 1993) takes a while to get going. At the conclusion of that book, Rose Lee and her family were struggling to cope with their enforced move to the Flats. The Texas town of Freedom had been demolished and the black community was trying to avoid complete disintegration. *Jubilee* begins some 75 years later in Connecticut with Emily Rose, 13, who knows little or nothing about her great-grandmother, Rose Lee; Juneteenth; or her black heritage. Her family is close to her father's white parents, but disconnected from her black Texas roots. The girl sees herself as both black and white, a "double." When, at Rose Lee's invitation, Emily and her siblings accompany their mother to Texas, the girl begins to learn about her African-American roots. Rose Lee, the teen heroine of *White Lilacs*, now in her 80s, tells about the family during the intervening years, and Emily's mother, Susan, fills in some background. For readers unfamiliar with the Juneteenth celebration, there is some good information here, but the valuable author's note included in the earlier title is not in the sequel. This absence of grounding leaves the story floating and of interest only to those who loved the first book. Those youngsters, in turn, will find disconcerting the fade of Rose Lee's voice in the second half of *Jubilee*, and her obituary seems tacked on to the ending. *Virginia Hamilton's Plain City* (Scholastic, 1993) has a richness and honesty that is lacking here. Carol A. Edwards, Minneapolis Public Library

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#### From Kirkus Reviews

Meyer connects generations in this sequel to *White Lilacs* (1993), set 75 years later, as 13-year-old Emily Rose goes from Connecticut to Texas to celebrate Juneteenth with her 87-year-old great-grandmother Rose Lee. It's a journey of self-discovery in more ways than one: Biracial Emily Rose knows more about her father's French-Canadian family than her mother's African-American heritage, and is puzzling over her sense of identity. She and her two brothers are not prepared for the discrimination they encounter on the bus trip, the church burnings they hear discussed, or the sharp racial divisions they see when they arrive. Still, their eyes aren't really opened until brother Steven is beaten and arrested for hanging out with a white girl. Meyer develops the story at a leisurely pace, introducing large numbers of people, switching the point of view from Emily Rose to Rose Lee at odd moments, repeating thoughts or anecdotes, weaving in elements--e.g., Emily Rose's new journal, mentioned once, and her feelings about being biracial--then leaving them to dangle. Patient readers will be rewarded by learning how the characters of the first book turned out and will come to admire the lively young protagonist who shares her great-grandmother's strength of character.

(Fiction. 11-15) -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

#### Review

"Meyer's strength is her large cast of compelling, multi-dimensional characters, whom readers will take to heart."--*Booklist*

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