



Dorothea's Eyes: Dorothea Lange Photographs the Truth

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After a childhood bout of polio left her with a limp, all Dorothea Lange wanted to do was disappear. But this desire not to be seen helped her learn how to blend into the background and observe others acutely. With a passion for the artistic life, and in spite of her family's disapproval, Dorothea pursued her dream to become a photographer and focused her lens on the previously unseen victims of the Great Depression. This poetic biography tells the emotional story of Lange's evolution as one of the founders of documentary photography. It includes a gallery of Lange's photographs, and an author's note, timeline, and bibliography.

Dorothea's Eyes: Dorothea Lange Photographs the Truth Details

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From Reader Review *Dorothea's Eyes: Dorothea Lange Photographs the Truth* for online ebook

Jill says

Dorothea Lange was born in 1895 in Hoboken, New Jersey. She became an American documentary photographer and photojournalist, best known for her Depression-era work for the Farm Security Administration (FSA) and for her pictures of the Japanese internment by the FDR Administration during WWII. Lange's photographs, still famous today, greatly influenced the development of documentary photography.

This book for kids tells the story of Dorothea Lange's childhood, and what led to her career later in life. Dorothea grew up alone with her mother after Dorothea's father left them when Dorothea was twelve. Dorothea already had experienced heartbreak in her life; she contracted polio when she was seven, and thereafter walked with a limp on her withered right leg. Kids taunted her, so she pretended to be invisible. She was lonely though, and passed the time by observing the details of everything that was around her.

By the time Dorothea was 18, she knew she wanted to be a photographer, and studied under photographers by doing whatever jobs they would give her. Eventually she was able to start her own portrait studio in San Francisco. She began to win wide acclaim for her skill at photography, and soon, all the richest families in California wanted portraits by her.

But Dorothea felt she should do more; she wanted to use her eyes *and* her heart. By this time the Great Depression had started, and what Dorothea saw all around her were people who were sad and lost. She well understood how they felt: invisible and ashamed. She took photo after photo, going out on the road to document what the effects of the Depression.

As the author reports:

“For five years, in twenty-two states, Dorothea drags through fields, climbs on cars, and crouches in the dirt to photograph people the world can't see. The jobless. The hungry. The homeless.”

Because of Dorothea, and the style she developed, called “documentary photography” - the country saw what she saw, and her photographs helped convince the government to provide people with work, food, and safe, clean homes.

“Dorothea's eyes,” the author concludes, “help us see with our hearts.”

In an Afterword, the author provides more background on this important artist, observing that her image “Migrant Mother” is “one of the most famous, most reproduced photographs in history.” There is also a selected bibliography, a detailed timeline, and information on where to see Lange's pictures online.

Although most of the book is illustrated in a striking mixed-media way by Gérard DuBois, to my delight the author also includes some reproductions of some of Lange's most famous photographs.

Gretchen says

The number of great picture book biographies continues to grow and this is one of them. I'd seen the photo Migrant Mother so many times, but I had no idea about the backstory to the photo or the photographer until I read this book. Dorothea Lange had a difficult life and she could have made it much easier on herself many times, but Dorothea felt a drive to make sure that others knew the story that she saw with her eyes and felt with her heart. She was able to do that with her photography. She was able to open the eyes and hearts of some others to what was right in front of them in our country but people simply looked over or didn't want to see. With a few of her actual photographs and a great timeline in the back, this is another book that will make a great mentor text for biographies and help introduce my students to more individuals than just the key ones in text books.

Steve Shilstone says

A life of Dorothea Lange distilled beautifully to its essence in 40 marvelously illustrated pages.

Michele Knott says

Really enjoyed this picture book biography from Barb Rosenstock. I like the way she organized the text and had one focus sentence on a page that really summed up who Dorothea was. I'm glad that some of her photography was included in the back of the book.

Chris says

Nice introduction for kids of the life of Dorothea Lange - what drove her and the type of photos she took. It touches upon the developing of them, but I wish this had been mentioned, and explained, a bit more to help inform our kids in this digital age. Although prone to sickness and always dealing with the polio she endured as a child, she is an active photographer in the streets and fields of the Depression. At the end of the book there is a sampling of six of her photos - including "Migrant Mother." An afterword, selected bibliography and two-page timeline are added touches at the end of the book. A great model for researching and teaching.

Manybooks says

With an often understated and sparse but always lyrically enchanting and entrancing narrative (that flows both sweetly and at times also somewhat sadly and painfully), Barb Rosenstock's Dorothea's Eyes: Dorothea Lange Photographs the Truth presents and depicts the uplifting and hearteningly encouraging biography of American photography pioneer and legend Dorothea Lange, and how she is able to persevere and overcome both her struggles with childhood polio (and the resulting nastiness and bullying that her being left with a pronounced limp engender) and her immigrant family's staunch disapproval of her desire to become, to learn how to be a photographer (this not being considered "ladylike"), in other words, how to pursue and embrace her dreams and desires (using cameras, using the medium of photography to capture the truth, to capture

what she, what her eyes and heart see and perceive and want to share with the world).

Undaunted by her family's annoyance and anger at her decision and equally undaunted by her polio related physical challenges, Dorothea relentlessly and fearlessly canvasses photographers' studios, asking for any kind of work, helping to build darkrooms, and above all learning how to use and manipulate the heavy cameras, and develop and mount photographs. And when at the age of twenty-three, Dorothea sets off on a trip around the world, she does not let the fact that all of her money is stolen in San Francisco discourage her; she seizes the opportunity to get a job developing photographs and then start her own San Francisco portrait studio (which soon becomes famous and an "in" place for San Francisco's elite to have their portraits taken). But soon Dorothea begins to realise that what she really desires and craves is to capture with her camera the current social climate of the United States, the faces, the lives and the myriad of stories of the victims of the Great Depression. Thus (and although this is generally and usually physically painful and tiring for her) Dorothea takes to the road to photograph the working poor, migrant farm workers, the jobless, families living in cramped decrepit automobiles (and even though her family and friends consider it at best strange that Dorothea would spend her time, her energy and use her photographic talents to take pictures of "poor people" Dorothea sees this as her purpose in life, to capture for posterity and for remembrance the images of those that we ignore and would rather choose to forget).

And while the five years Dorothea spends canvassing over twenty US states and taking picture after picture of the victims of the Great Depression, of the working poor, the unemployed, those with no real homes are tiring and physically exhausting (as especially her polio affected leg hurts always and without remission), newspapers and magazines begin to increasingly print and publish Dorothea's images, not only making her more and more both nationally and internationally famous and respected as a photographer, as an artist, but also and perhaps even more importantly, confronting the American people (both citizens and politicians) with the reality of poverty, the reality of struggle, of what the Great Depression has wrought and its many victims (and it is actually her very photographs, Dorothea's captured and published images, that are amongst the reasons why the U.S. federal government finally decides to act and to try to provide jobs for the unemployed, and families with safe and clean homes).

Now while the main star of Dorothea's Eyes is of course author Barb Rosenstock's gloriously descriptive, evocative and sweetly lyrical and emotion-inducing text, Gérard DuBois' accompanying illustrations are also simply and utterly lovely and do very much provide an in all manner wonderful and imaginative compliment to and mirror of the presented narrative. Although by themselves, I would not necessarily consider them personal favourites, DuBois' illustrations are indeed a more than immensely worthy accompaniment to Rosenstock's printed words, as they spectacularly and with realistic imagination mirror both the time and place as well as the emotions and feelings of the author's words and vocabulary images (and as such, they are indeed for me personally as absolutely glorious and as evocative as the latter). Especially the reddish and fuzzily muted depiction of Dorothea in her darkroom always sends shivers of appreciation up and down my spine (and really does so much enhance the narrative, the author's description of Dorothea's relentless and determined pursuit of becoming a photographer), but really, ALL of the images, all of Gérard Dubois' illustrations evoke in me the same kind of emotion and sense of awe that Barb Rosenstock's text creates.

And even today, Dorothea Lange's photographs are still as powerful and as evocative as when she took them in the 1930s; they have lost none of their appeal, they have lost none of their strength of image (which can be easily seen within the pages of Dorothea's Eyes, as author Barb Rosenstock has appreciatively included a number of them, including the photograph of a migrant farm worker mother which is now considered one of the most famous and reproduced photographs in history). Now just from my immense liking (actually my intense love) of both text and image (and the sweet and evocative marriage of the two), my rating for Dorothea's Eyes is most definitely already a very high five stars, but what has moved Dorothea's Eyes from

merely an appreciated and much enjoyed five star picture book biography to a permanent resident on my favourites shelf is the informative author's note at the back (which also includes a bibliography, suggestions for further reading, quotations sources, as well as a time line). Dorothea's Eyes is what I would glowingly and unilaterally label a perfect children's picture book biography (and is to be highly recommended to and for anyone, both children and adults).

Barbara says

The iconic photograph known as Migrant Mother may have been taken in 1936, but it still speaks volumes about the fears, frustration and poverty endured by many Americans during the Great Depression. There are books describing how its photographer, Dorothea Lange came to take that photograph and others that gave a face to economic deprivation and opened the hearts of anyone who saw those photographs about how many were existing. For those of us who wanted to learn more about the formative years of the talented photographer, this book provides insight into her life and her own struggles with polio and the economic struggles caused by her father's abandonment of the family. Although she tackled a job not typically associated with a woman and she made a success of taking studio portraits, Lange was drawn to other subjects and situations not usually photographed. Perhaps because of her own ability to fade into the woodwork and to disappear behind her camera or perhaps because her subjects sensed that their lives and stories mattered to her, Lange was able to take pictures of very private moments of many men and women when they were not necessarily able to put their best faces forward and when they were at their most vulnerable. As someone who dislikes having her picture taken even when at her best, this ability intrigues me just as its likely to fascinate young readers. Obviously, this picture book would be a great introduction to the Dust Bowl, the Great Depression or any of the marvelous works of literature that were inspired by that period in history. I enjoyed the illustrations, created with acrylics and using digital techniques, that often play with perspective. Be sure to check out the endpapers with the repeated series of cameras resting on tripods.

Martha says

Dorothea Lange is the photographer who captured the famous image of the "Migrant Mother" in 1936, as part of FDR's New Deal program to document the lives of people during the Great Depression. In Barb Rosenstock's narrative nonfiction story, through rich earthy toned acrylic and digital illustrations, and clear spare text, the reader learns of young Dorothea's private physical struggles with polio, and the damage it left on one of her withered legs. Perhaps because she suffered from this all of her life, she felt empathy in others facing serious struggles. The refrain as she grew up is phrased so eloquently, "Dorothea sees with her eyes and her heart." She selected poor people with big problems as subjects for her now famous photographs, no one ever picked destitute people for their subjects before her. This beginning biography includes a factual mini biography, bibliography, and comprehensive timeline attractively displayed as rows of old film strips. The story of photographer, Dorothea Lange will capture children's visual and creative interests, with its stark expressive illustrations, and portrayal of the gritty determination that lead to the success of a girl who began her life with so many challenges.

Lynne says

I am so impressed with the lovely picture-book biographies that have been published in the last couple years,

and this is one of the best. It tells the story of photographer Dorothea Lange chronicling her life from childhood through her experiences in photography. The book concludes with some of her photographs, an additional essay on her importance in both history and photography, a selected bibliography, and a great timeline of her life. This is a great read for kids interested in photography or anyone looking for a bio of a strong woman.

Christina says

Nice look at Dorothea Lange's childhood and adult career, how she went from a shy limping polio survivor who became good at being "invisible" and observing those around her, to a groundbreaking photographer whose iconic images taken for the Works Progress Administration symbolize the Great Depression today. Young Dorothy learned photography to support herself when a cross-country trip ended abruptly and she was stranded in San Francisco with no money. She soon went from taking portraits of wealthy studio clients to portraits of the poor and unemployed, helping the government to improve people's lives and always showing truth and love in her photographs. Nice illustrations, realistic "antiqued" style paintings of people on stark white backgrounds that stand out like they are vintage wooden toys. Really nice. Loved the two-page spread of Dorothy in the darkroom, with its glowing red tones. Includes reproductions of her 6 most famous photographs in note with highlights and details of her career, also a timeline of her life and major contemporaneous world events. Direct quotes are sourced. Bibliography. Nice endpapers, even! (camera and tripod design) And clever cover: front facing photo and back-facing photo show Dorothy and one of her subjects being photographed.

Patricia McLaughlin says

What a life! This beautifully crafted picture-book biography describes the singular life of world-renowned photographer Dorothea Lange, who devoted herself to seeing the Truth through the aperture of her heart. DuBois' illustrations frame the story well, especially the crimson-saturated rendering of Lange developing prints in the chicken-coop darkroom. Stunning! Includes an insightful Author's Note, resourceful Selected Bibliography, and helpful Timeline of Lange's momentous life.

"The truth, seen with love, becomes Dorothea's art."

Linda says

I know the photographs of Dorothea Lange, but until now I didn't know her story. Born to love seeing what others might miss, early on she loves faces. At seven, she contracts polio, ending with a limp and a brace. She learns that others make fun of it, learns to be still and hide unnoticed, but at the same time, she watches. Through tough money times, her father leaves and Dorothea must go with her mother and wait long hours while her mother works. She is a new girl and often skips school to peer into tenements of immigrants, as the story goes, "watchful" and "curious". DuBois's illustrations follow the text with muted browntone scenes of Dorothea's story. She tells her family she's going to be a photographer, and they are stunned. "It. . .It isn't ladylike" But she persists and her first work is only to answer phones and mount photographs. She learns about cameras, she studies the negatives, and again knows that she loves faces. Through happenstance she ends up in California, makes a name for her work by taking photo portraits of rich families. But she's

missing something, asks: "Am I using my eyes and my heart?"

This is now the time of the Great Depression and one day Dorothea notices a bread line, a lone man with a battered cup, the one for begging. She takes photos, and her friends don't understand. The book reads: "No one takes photos of poor people." She persists and travels, despite the leg pain and the fatigue. She won't let people forget, and the media publishes those pictures. Just as I know the pictures, I bet you do, too. She is known to have started the idea of documentary photography, was influential in several captures of important parts of our history.

from Dorothea: "I know how to keep an expression. . .that would draw no attention, so no one would look at me. I have used that my whole life in photography. . . . I can turn it on or off. If I don't want anyone to see me I can make the kind of face so eyes go off me . . .

I was never obviously there."

Barb Rosenstock offers additional important back matter, a partial bibliography, books for further reading, some of Dorothea's famous photographs and a timeline.

Kellee says

Full review: <http://www.unleashingreaders.com/?p=1...>

Friends and family of mine know that art is dear to me because my father is an art museum director, and photography is especially dear to me because my mom is a photographer. Dorothea Lange's Migrant Mother is one of the most famous photographs ever taken but not Dorothea Lange herself isn't often talked about. Her life is fascinating, and I love the messages that she focused on in her artwork. I definitely would love to team this book up with Photos Framed because it is the biography behind the photo.

Suzanne says

Have you ever seen the iconic photo of the migrant mother? Dorothea Lange took that photo and hundreds of others, but she was not always a photographer. As a child she noticed things - faces, shadows, patterns, buildings - there was plenty to see in New York. When she tells her family that she plans to be a photographer they don't understand. It isn't ladylike to mix chemicals, carry around heavy equipment, and spend her time with strangers. But Dorothea knows what she wants and finds work in photography studios, learning everything she can for five years. She move to San Francisco and starts her own portrait studio, but then the Great Depression hits. Her love of faces leads her to make photos of bread lines, tent cities, in twenty-two states she takes these pictures for five years. Her photos make the plight of these people known to everyone and help convince politicians of the need for programs to help them.

The back matter contains some of Dorothea's photos and more details about her life and work. There is also a bibliography, further reading suggestions, and a timeline to help out those who are interested in learning more. The text of the book does a wonderful job of focusing on Dorothea's interest in people from her childhood through her whole life, and the connection she made with those she photographed. I love the period details in the illustrations such as the clothing, the cars, and even the cameras that Dorothea uses. It would be fun to bring in cameras from various time periods and let my students see how they have changed as technology improved. Kids today don't really know about film and dark rooms and box cameras.

I highly recommend this to classrooms, libraries, and anyone interested in famous women, the Great

Depression, or photography. I read a copy provided by the publisher for review purposes.

Aliza Werner says

Biography of Dorothea Lange, who left behind a comfortable studio for portraiture to capture everyday people in their often poverty-stricken, destitute situations. Many of her depression era photos became famous and are recognizable by many.
