

# GEORGIA'S BONES

Written by Jen Bryant  
Illustrated by Bethanne Andersen

*In the woods around her father's Wisconsin farm, she collected shapes: flowers, leaves, sticks and stones. She put them in her pocket and took them home.*

Growing up on a Wisconsin farm, Georgia begins gathering all sorts of objects: sticks and stones, flowers and bones. Although she was teased for her interest in unique shapes and sizes, young Georgia declared: "Someday, I'm going to be an artist"—and that is exactly what she became.

Jen Bryant's story of Georgia O'Keeffe celebrates the famous artist's fascination with natural shapes, "common objects," and her unusual way of looking at the world. Bethanne Andersen's fluid, graceful illustrations capture the beauty of O'Keeffe's work and spirit.



This bold, beautiful rendition has a certain nonconformist flair that surely would have earned O'Keeffe's stamp of approval.

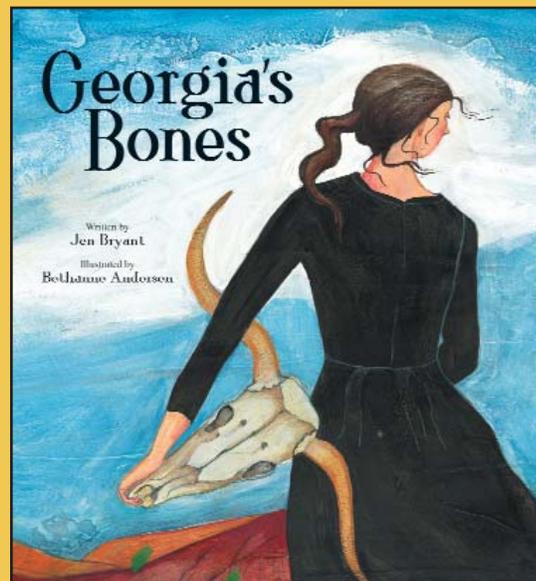
—*Booklist*

Bryant's lyrical text serves as a gentle introduction to a remarkable artist.... Andersen is sensitive to O'Keeffe's style and subject matter, foreshadowing some of her famous paintings in scenes throughout the book.... A fine first look at O'Keeffe.

—*School Library Journal*

## THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

- ◆ Individuality
- ◆ Creativity
- ◆ Beauty/Aesthetics
- ◆ Art/Art History
- ◆ Professions



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Full-color illustrations throughout

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## VOCABULARY

Look up the word “notion” in the dictionary.  
Write a sentence about yourself using this word.



## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE READING THE BOOK

1. What sort of person do you think is most likely to become an artist? What sort of person would probably NOT choose to become an artist? Why?

2. Describe a collection that you have. What made you begin your collection? How do you display it? What are some reasons that people collect things? Write a brief description of your collection and bring it in to share.



## QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON AFTER READING THE BOOK

1. Compare the objects that Georgia collected on her father’s farm with those she collected later in New York and New Mexico. How were they the same? In what ways were they different? Why do you think Georgia was attracted to them?

2. Why do think Georgia’s family members considered her fascination with “common objects” unusual? How was her fascination with these objects helpful to her as an adult artist?

3. Georgia grew up on a farm in Wisconsin, but later she lived in several different places, including New York City and the desert of New Mexico. How might living in such very different locations have affected Georgia’s art? What aspect do you think it influenced the most? Her subjects? Her use of color? Shapes? Her sense of space and light?

4. In this book, the author uses at least five different synonyms (words that mean the same) for “see.” Why do you think she does this? Are there different ways of seeing? What are some of them?

## ACTIVITIES

1. Locate Wisconsin, New York City, and New Mexico on a map. Using an encyclopedia or atlas, read about the climate, seasons, geography and population of each one. Discuss the possible advantages and disadvantages of being an artist in each place.

2. How does the author describe clouds and bones in this book (pages 21 and 24)? The author makes comparisons in each of these—what does she compare the clouds to? And the bones? Why do you think she does this? Look out your window and observe the clouds. Using your own comparison, describe what you see.

3. In the early decades of the 20th century, when Georgia O’Keeffe was becoming a well-known painter, photography became a popular form of art. Research the history of photography and discuss how advances in this art form might have affected Georgia’s choice of subjects and the way she painted them.

4. Make a list of ways that an artist’s daily life might differ from someone with a more typical job—such as a teacher, a business person, or a dentist. Include ideas about where they work, when and how long they work, how they are paid, and what kind of training and education they needed.

5. Georgia O’Keeffe became a successful painter at a time when few women were taken seriously as artists. Read about other American artists who worked during the same time as O’Keeffe and compare their art to hers. How is it similar? How is it different? Discuss which of Georgia’s personality traits may have helped her to become successful.

6. Write your own definition of “creativity.” Compare your ideas to the dictionary definition. Organize a discussion in which you debate whether creativity is inherited or learned—or some combination of both. Support your argument with facts and examples.

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## ABOUT

*the Author & Illustrator*

**J**en Bryant has authored several books for young readers, including the young adult novel-in-verse,



*The Trial* (Knopf), a Junior Library Guild Selection, and *Thomas Merton: Poet, Prophet, Priest* (Eerdmans), which was named to the New York Public Library's Best Books for the Teen Age List. Jen says that *Georgia's Bones* was inspired by Georgia

O'Keefe's commitment to life as an artist when few women were taken seriously as artists. Jen lives in Uwchland, Pennsylvania.

**B**ethanne Andersen has illustrated many books for young readers, including *Seven Brave Women* (Greenwillow),



which received both the Boston Globe-Horn Book Honor Award and the Jane Addams Peace Award; and *Bluebird Summer* (Greenwillow), which was awarded the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators Golden Kite

Honor Book Award. Bethanne lives in Boise, Idaho.

If you have any other suggestions for using *Georgia's Bones* with young readers, we would be happy to hear from you.

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