



Sunpainters: Eclipse of the Navajo Sun

By Baje, Sr. Whitethorne

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Kii Leonard sits in his favorite juniper tree. While listening to the radio, Kii Leonard's grandfather, Pipi, announces that the sun has died. Kii Leonard saw a strange gloom all around him. Everywhere he looked, the deep purple and red darkness was there. Join Kii as he learns about the Naa'ach'aahii, or painters, who visit during this astronomical event.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Whitethorne, a Navajo artist making his children's book debut, presents a slice of rural Navajo life in this story-within-a-story. Grandfather Pipa calls Kii Leonard into the hogan to tell him that the sun "has died"; a solar eclipse has washed the surrounding mountains in and deep purples and reds. He explains to the boy that he must wait respectfully for the Na'ach'aahii, who come from the Four Directions carrying a paint brush and a can of paint, each responsible for replacing a different color of the rainbow. Repainting the world after the eclipse, the Na'ach'aahii restore life and allow the rebirth of the sun-processes pleasingly depicted in the Southwest-style art. While the text is repetitious and gawky, the theme is appealing, and the framing device affords readers of other cultures a rare opportunity to experience a Native American perspective. Ages 5-up. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From School Library Journal

Kindergarten-Grade 3?Navajo artist Whitethorne has crafted a lovely, thoughtful story of a young boy experiencing his first solar eclipse. Kii Leonard is guided by his wise grandfather, Pipa, who tells him the story of the Na'ach'aahii, the Little Painters who repaint the world at this time, adding new colors and new life to the world. Pipa also explains that during times of natural phenomena, it is important to be still and to show reverence for Mother Earth. The loving relationship between grandson and grandfather is convincing, as the elderly man calmly leads the boy through what could have been a frightening experience. Kii notes that Pipa's smile warms him like the sun above. The full-and double-page illustrations are stylish in their use of brilliant color and traditional Navajo patterns, but are also lively and down-to-earth. A note at the end adds some background information and encourages readers to ponder their own place in the cycle of nature. Wise and heartwarming, this is an excellent introduction to Navajo folklore.?Marilyn Taniguchi, Santa Monica Public Library, CA
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About the Author

Baje Whitethorne, Sr. is a member of the Reed clan. He is originally from Shonto, Arizona. He is the author of Sunpainters: Eclipse of the Navajo Sun and the illustrator of native American legends including Monster Birds, Monster Slayer and Sika and the Raven. His watercolor paintings appear at the Heard Museum, The Smithsonian Museum, The Field Museum, the Gallup Indian Ceremonial and the Museum of Northern Arizona. In 1998 he was named by the Arizona Library Association as an Outstanding Contributor to Children's Literature.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Luther Brown:

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Nancy Soto:

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