In the morning Jake watches the sun wake up. He makes a big stretch, and the sun stretches, too.

Thirteen-year-old Jake has just moved to New York City. In his new neighborhood, Harlem, he sees new people and hears new sounds. At Utopia Children’s House, an after-school arts center, the young boy uses his hands, paper, paint, glue, and other things to make sense of the world around him. Jake’s Harlem has all the shouts and songs and noises of the Harlem outside, but here they are colors, they are shadows dancing, they are rhythms, they are light. And in the face of an old mask from Africa, he sees the world around him—and himself.

Inspired by the childhood of the artist Jacob Lawrence in 1930s Harlem, Jake Makes a World introduces young readers to a boy who finds inspiration in the everyday things that surround him.
This book is dedicated to the memory of Walter Dean Myers.

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In the morning Jake watches the sun wake up. He makes a big stretch, and the sun stretches, too.
With first light, the dancing dark shadows begin to fade. Then the colors come again. Yellow, orange, and blue on the quilt that covers Jake and his brother in bed. Mother’s paper flowers in pink and red.
His feet sink deep into the thick blue rug. When his toes touch the ground, it’s like a sky upside down.

When Jake moved to this new city, this New York, to this neighborhood called Harlem to live with Mother again, these familiar things from his old home in Philadelphia greeted him like long-lost friends.
Outside Jake’s building, men play chess and checkers, balancing the boards on their knees.

Mothers walk fast to work and more work. Signs promise home-cooked meals for fifteen cents and a shoeshine to make you brand-new.

Older boys sell fruit from a wagon or ice from a bucket, shouting for people to come down and get it.
A preacher in a hat shouts and sings about God. A newsboy tells the stories of the day from downtown and around the world but tells them with a tune.

At the corner a short man stands on a stepladder, telling everyone how we will get the freedom we need.
Most days after school, Jake goes to a place called Utopia Children’s House. The word “utopia” means that it is a special place, unlike any other. For Jake, it is.
Thank you for downloading this preview of *Jake Makes a World*. To continue reading, purchase the book by clicking [here].

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