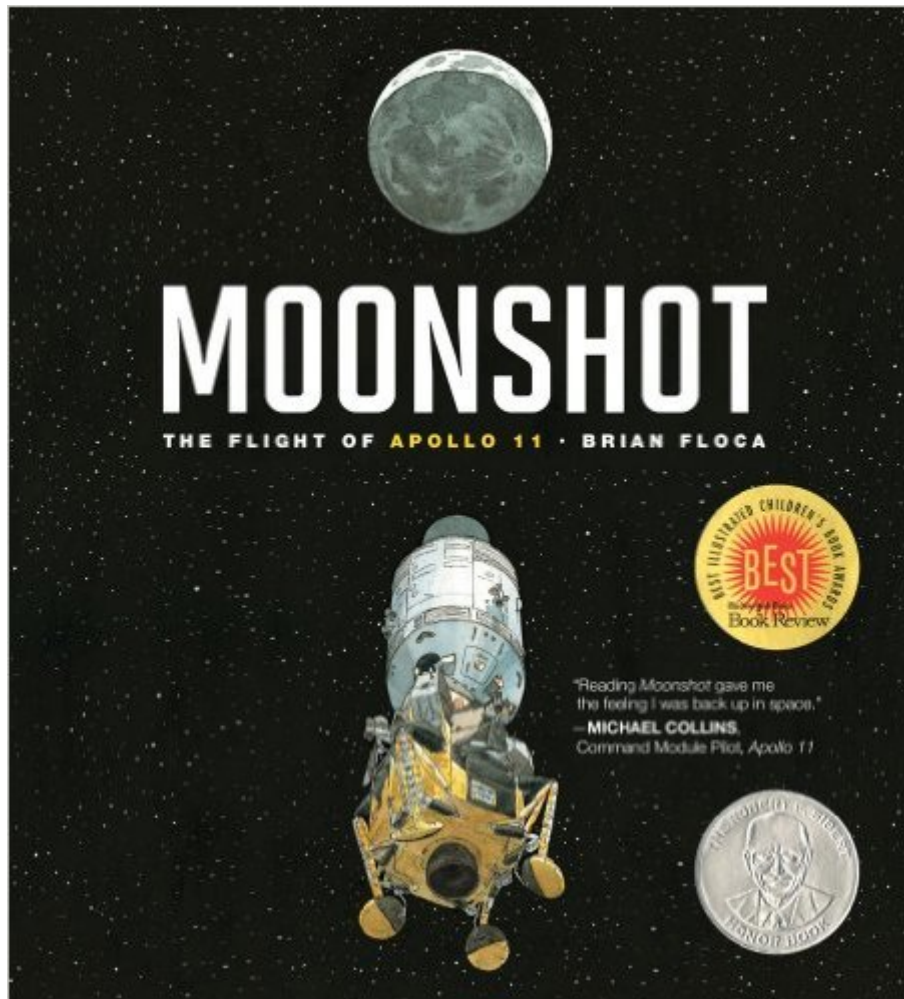


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# Moonshot: The Flight Of Apollo 11 (Richard Jackson Books (Atheneum Hardcover))



## Synopsis

Simply told, grandly shown, here is the flight of Apollo 11. Here for a new generation of readers and explorers are the steady astronauts, clicking themselves into gloves and helmets, strapping themselves into sideways seats. Here are their great machines in all their detail and monumentality, the ROAR of rockets, and the silence of the Moon. Here is a story of adventure and discovery -- a story of leaving and returning during the summer of 1969, and a story of home, seen whole, from far away.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD990L (What's this?)

Series: Richard Jackson Books (Atheneum Hardcover)

Hardcover: 48 pages

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Product Dimensions: 10.5 x 0.4 x 11.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars Â See all reviews Â (99 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #20,501 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #7 in Â Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Exploration & Discovery #12 in Â Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Science Studies > Astronomy & Space > Aeronautics & Space #21 in Â Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1900s

Age Range: 4 - 10 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 5

## Customer Reviews

I consider myself a person of at least average intelligence. I know how to hold down a job. To feed and clothe myself. And when it comes to historical events I tend to think that I know most of the pertinent details. Take the original moon landing of Apollo 11 as one such example. Sure, I knew that the folks on the ship were "Buzz" Aldrin, Michael Collins, and Neil Armstrong. I knew it was a flight filled with close calls and near catastrophes (thank YOU Â Team Moon Â by Catherine Thimmesh!). And I knew those guys got back. Slap your hands together, end of story. But I guess... I dunno. I hate to admit this but I don't think I ever really had a great visual sense of how it all

worked. Should I? Is that required of every fine upstanding American citizen? Maybe not, but how can you really get a sense of the moon landing if you don't know what it looked like? To the rescue comes Brian Floca with *Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11*. Essentially Brian has written a book that works for every human being between the ages of 4 to 104 (sorry, 105-year-olds). Poetic, scientifically accurate, interesting, mesmerizing, you name it. The man has penned a little old masterpiece here, just in time for the 40th anniversary of the moon landing. You've lots of space flight picture books to choose from this year, but if I had to pick just one for my children's library shelves, it would be this. A masterpiece of innovation (and the moon landing's not to shabby either). "We choose to go to the Moon," said President Kennedy. So to the moon we went. With simple text, Brian Floca shows us the steps leading up to that first walk. Equipment is secured. The three astronauts have said goodbye. They lock into their seats, the countdown begins, and ROAR. They're off. Covering everything from how astronauts eat and sleep, to other bodily functions, we finally see the men on the surface of the moon, considering the sky as the people at home cheer. Safely returned, the final shot is of a family who has watched it all on television, running beneath the moon, knowing that the heroes have returned, "To warmth, to light, to home at last." Sources are listed on the title page. Endpapers illustrate the moon landing at the front of the book, and give additional information with words alone at the end. We all know that Brian's a phenomenal artist. No arguments there. Has he ever really gotten proper credit for his writing, though? The nice thing about this story is that at 48 pages, Floca has time to build the tale with simple words and quiet repetition. The very first thing you read when you open it up is "High above there is the Moon, cold and quiet, no air, no life, but glowing in the sky." This phrase is repeated several times in the book, the strange foreign aspects of the moon countered by its comforting glow. Floca has taken time to give weight and meaning to this event. It's more than just a technical achievement. It's the fulfillment of a species' hopes and dreams. His illustrations too capture the excitement of the event and, to a certain extent, the sheer vast loneliness of going there. In one shot we see Neil looking up at the sky in wonder. The next shot and you're far behind the astronauts, but still on the surface of the moon. The sky is without stars and the earth hangs there, half in darkness. Says the text, "... high above there is the Earth, rushing oceans, racing clouds, swaying fields and forests. Family, friends, and strangers, everyone you've ever known, everyone you might - the good and lonely Earth, glowing in the sky." I love that pairing there, that "everyone you've ever known, everyone you might." Let no one tell you that watercolors are dull. Admittedly Floca works with a variety of materials, including ink, acrylic, and gouache, but his watercolors are what you remember. On top of that, you remember his choices of how to portray various scenes. For example, early on there are dramatic

shots of the liftoff, where the only thing seen is the rapidly disappearing shuttle, viewed only through the rockets. This view then peels back with another turn of the page, and you're far away, watching a small rocket shooting up white-hot and yellow, dirty clouds billowing far beneath. Later the moon fills up an entire page (which in a book that's 11.8 inches by 10.6 inches is no mean feat) and we have the awe of seeing the rocket approach its sheer mass. Many of these shots are contrasted with images of a family back on the earth. This family actually plays a role in most of the book. They are featured on the title page, staring up into the sky (the dad looking suspiciously similar to the artist himself). They center the book. Ground it. Give you a sense that this isn't some high-tech incident of the past, but a moment that all people could relate to and wonder at. Consider too Floca's use of white space. There's a lot of it here, though when I close the book all I can remember are the shots that fill the pages. But at first, anyway, people do their work against a pure unpainted background. Earth, it seems, is where is there lurks white space. Space, on the other hand, is just a sea of black. The changeover really occurs when you get to the six panel two-page split of the countdown. I can suddenly see in this portion how you could read this section aloud with a child, ratcheting up the tension, until that moment the rocket is released and bursts into the sky. Yee-haw!!

I was with some librarians the other day, and one of them happened to mention a particular non-fiction picture book pet peeve they have. We were considering a book (not this one) and we noticed that pertinent information was missing from the text, but then explained away in the very adult Afterword. My co-worker lamented this kind of lazy writing. If a non-fiction picture book doesn't make sense on its own without the Afterword then it really isn't a successful piece of writing. I tend to agree, particularly after reading *Moonshot*. The storyline inside makes sense without explanation. But Floca has added additional information on the endpapers for those kids (and, let's face it, adults) who want to know a little more about the behind-the-scenes action. Mind you, you don't need these endpapers to make sense of the book, but they add to the overall reading experience. Better still, Floca makes the front endpapers very visual, with pictures of how each of the segments of the Apollo broke off, reattached, broke off again, reattached, again, and generally brought the astronauts to and from the moon. The stuff I've never really comprehended has now been illustrated in such a way that even a five-year-old could understand. No mean feat. Astronaut books for the younger set come and go, but this one's definitely here to stay. Consider pairing it alongside Meghan McCarthy's fabulous *Astronaut Handbook* for yet another simply worded but well-researched peek into the far reaches of outer space. This is a book that can appeal to small fry, as well as older and more seemingly mature siblings. Visually breathtaking with a poetic turn of phrase, *Moonshot* elevates a moment in history that cannot be lauded enough. If nothing else it

makes one thing clear: Boy, that moon landing was cool!

The astronauts have practiced their roles many times as has everyone who had anything to do with Apollo 11. In Launch Control near the rocket in sunny Florida they are ready. In Mission Control all the way over in Houston they are ready. Everyone around the world is watching. People are glued to their television sets anxiously awaiting liftoff. Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins and Buzz Aldrin are going to take "their two small spaceships," the Columbia and Eagle to the moon and back. 10 ... 9 ... 8 ... 7 ... " ... high above there is the Earth, rushing oceans, racing clouds, swaying fields and forests. Family, friends, and strangers, everyone you've ever known, everyone you might--the good and lonely Earth, glowing in the sky." This is the BEST book on the flight of Apollo 11 I've seen for this age group. The flowing text and the stunning art work mesh perfectly to generate the mood of the flight and that of the generation it occurred in. For example, when the mood is quiet, the text is light, set against a white background and the art work is small and the atmosphere mellow. When the story gets exciting or busy both the text and art work explode with excitement. LIFTOFF! The front end pages are fully illustrated with everything from the rollout to the Saturn Launch Vehicle and the Apollo Spacecraft! In the back is more information on this story. Be prepared for a lot of exiting reading with this book!

I just received it tonight and read it to my 4-year-old son, who interrupted several times per page to ask questions. ("How did people on Earth know the astronauts had landed?") The front endsheet has technical information and drawings. The back endsheet has lots of prose for the grown-ups to fill in their history. The pages in between are works of art.

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