Elizabeth Hale, "Entry on: Wings by Christopher Myers", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2020). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1104. Entry version as of November 19, 2026.

Christopher Myers

Wings

United States of America (2000)

TAGS: Icarus

We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Wings
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	United States of America
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2000
First Edition Details	Christopher Myers, *Wings*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2000, 40 pp.
ISBN	97805900337700
Genre	Picture books
Target Audience	Children
Author of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.aus
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com

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Creators

Christopher Myers , b. 1974
(Author, Illustrator)

Christopher Dean “Chris” Myers is a writer, illustrator, dancer and fine artist. The son of Constance Myers and Walter Dean Myers, a distinguished and prolific Black writer for children, Christopher Myers lives in New York. He studied at Brown University and the Whitney Museum of Art Independent Studio Program. He has written and illustrated 20 books, for children and for adults, including illustrated editions of the work of e.e. cummings, Zora Neale Hurston, Lewis Carroll, and Walter Dean Myers. He illustrated *Firebird*, by the prima ballerina Misty Copeland, about how to dance the famous role. He has held several fine art exhibitions, including *Chris Myers’ All-Negro Freakshow* (2000), *Am I Going Too Fast?* (2014) *Go Forth* (2016), *Let the Mermaids Flirt With Me*. Mythical and animal imagery features in his art, which utilizes paint, photography and collage, and frequently draws on images of wings and feathers.

Sources:

Profile at en.wikipedia.org (accessed: September 15, 2020).

Christopher Myers: Let the Mermaids Flirt With Me, contemporaryand.com (accessed: September 15, 2020).

"Myers, Christopher" in *Something About the Author*, Lisa Kumar eds, volume 306, Farmington Hills, Mich.: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2017, 138–141.

Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.aus

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Additional information

Summary

Narrated by an unnamed girl, *Wings* is the story of Ikarus Jackson, a boy with wings, who starts at a new school and is bullied for being different. The girl, who is shy and quiet, watches in dismay as teachers and pupils single him out and bring him down. When Ikarus leaves the school sadly, the girl follows, mesmerised by the beauty of his flight, but he is still singled out. Finally, the girl finds her voice, and tells him "your flying is beautiful." Ikarus soars into the sky, and the girl says to everyone "look at that amazing boy!." The back cover of the book says "Let your spirit soar."

Analysis

This beautiful picture book reverses the myth of Icarus to show a child whose flight is inhibited by bullying and unkindness. Instead of soaring too close to the sun, Ikarus is brought low by jeers and taunts of his classmates. But the faith and support of the unnamed narrator helps him remember who he is and how special he is. Supporting Ikarus allows the girl (who is also a silenced outsider) to speak up in his defence, and find her own voice. The motto on the back cover of the book, "Let your spirit soar," sums up the story's message: of self-belief and individuality.

Myers' illustrations are powerful, using silhouette and collage to present a jagged but vivid picture of city life: of basketball courts and classrooms, of city streets, pigeons, and policemen. That the main characters are Black, enhances the message – the message of self-belief in an unfair society—the danger for a Black Icarus is stronger than ever. However, it is also possible that Myers is challenging the myth of Icarus, advocating for the power of the artist to soar, for to remain on the ground and to be compromised by convention is equally, if not more dangerous to the spirit.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Icarus

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Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture

Boys Bullying* Girls Individuality

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