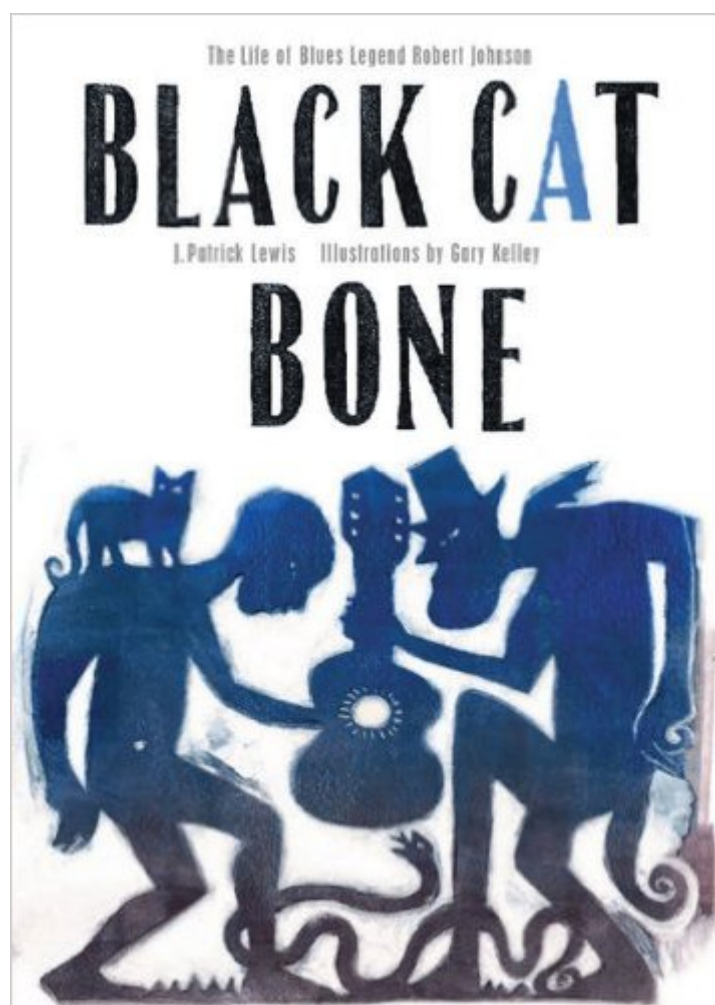


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# Black Cat Bone



## Synopsis

Legend credits his success to a midnight pact at a crossroads, but what is the real story of bluesman Robert Johnson?

## Book Information

Hardcover: 48 pages

Publisher: Creative Editions; Stated First Edition / First Printing edition (September 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1568461941

ISBN-13: 978-1568461946

Product Dimensions: 9 x 0.4 x 12.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (2 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #432,721 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #28 in [Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Music > History](#) #94 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Musical](#) #613 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Multicultural](#)

Age Range: 11 - 15 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

When I first received *Black Cat Bone: The Life of Blues Legend Robert Johnson*, I wondered why someone would write a picture book about a man who reportedly sold his soul to the devil in exchange for his now-legendary guitar licks, who also drank heavily, stole men's wives, and ultimately died after being poisoned by a jealous husband. Upon further inspection, I discovered that the book is geared toward an audience of grade six and up and that J. Patrick Lewis did a fine job of ever-so-slightly glossing over the rather grittier parts of Robert Johnson's life, creating a poetic tribute to the stories he left behind. I did not hear Robert Johnson until I was eighteen, although I'm sure many of my more musically inclined friends--the ones who sought out old vinyl while I was still copying Paula Abdul's dance moves--learned about him long before that. But imagine being introduced to Johnson as early as age twelve. It's the kind of moment that can change the course of your future, especially if you happen to already have access to an acoustic guitar. Lewis tells the story of Johnson's life through verse, with further biographical information in the forward and endnotes. His poems, including multiple rhyme schemes and free verse appropriate to their subjects, will leave readers smiling with their bluesy rhythms and soulful lines. Likewise, Gary

Kelley's illustrations are stunning. Although they could easily stand on their own, they are the perfect complement to Lewis's writing and Johnson's history. Still, I wonder what pre-teen would feel comfortable whipping out a picture book in homeroom--perhaps one who can fully appreciate the legend that was Robert Johnson and knows that it doesn't matter a lick what people think. All that matters is that you have stood at the crossroad and found which way is yours. *Armchair Interviews* says: Wonderful words about the man and his music.

A poetical biography of Robert Johnson, blues musician. The story is told through a series of poems, so check with your child's teacher before you choose it for a report. The illustrations are fascinating, and it's fun to play his music, or other blues music, while you read and talk about this with your kids. There is a good summary/timeline at the back of the book. Two cautions: 1) The book mentions the legend that Robert Johnson "sold his soul to the devil" to become a musician. In our family, we don't play around with stuff like that, so I had to address that up front. 2) Poisoned to death at age 27, legend has it by a jealous husband. This book does mention hundreds of love affairs and jealous husbands. Moms and dads need to know what their young ones are reading. The grown-up subject matter makes this book better for junior high students and older, and the illustrations are so interesting that this will not come across as "just a kids' book." Very well done.

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