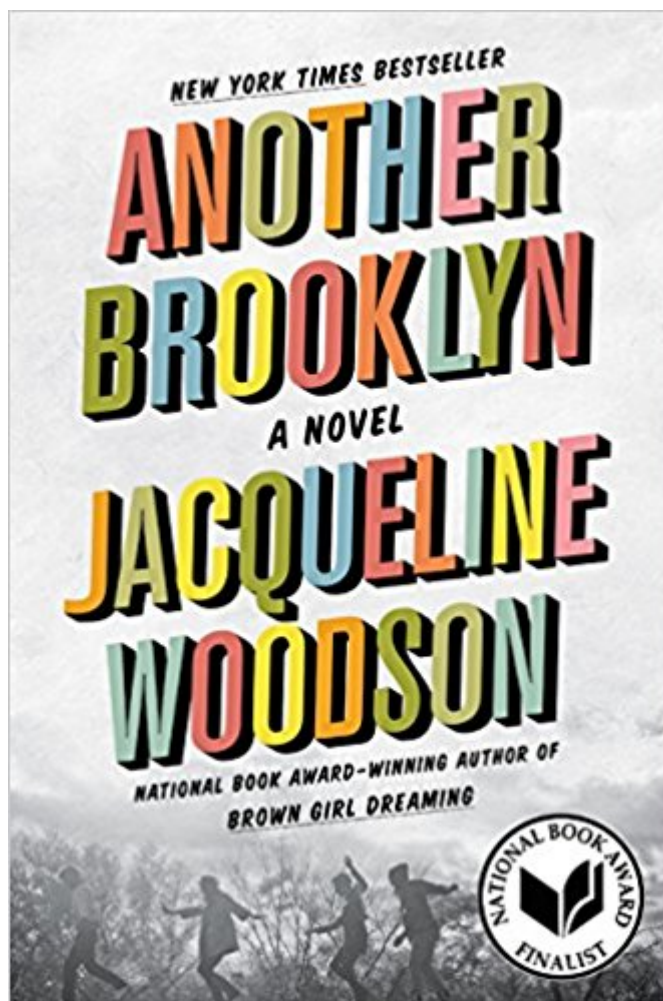


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# Another Brooklyn: A Novel



## Synopsis

A Finalist for the 2016 National Book Award New York Times Bestseller A Seattle Times pick for Summer Reading Roundup 2017 The acclaimed New York Times bestselling and National Book Award-winning author of *Brown Girl Dreaming* delivers her first adult novel in twenty years. Running into a long-ago friend sets memory from the 1970s in motion for August, transporting her to a time and a place where friendship was everything until it wasn't. For August and her girls, sharing confidences as they ambled through neighborhood streets, Brooklyn was a place where they believed that they were beautiful, talented, brilliant—a part of a future that belonged to them. But beneath the hopeful veneer, there was another Brooklyn, a dangerous place where grown men reached for innocent girls in dark hallways, where ghosts haunted the night, where mothers disappeared. A world where madness was just a sunset away and fathers found hope in religion. Like Louise Meriwether's *Daddy Was a Number Runner* and Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina*, Jacqueline Woodson's *Another Brooklyn* heartbreakingly illuminates the formative time when childhood gives way to adulthood—the promise and peril of growing up—and exquisitely renders a powerful, indelible, and fleeting friendship that united four young lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

An Best Book of August 2016: *Another Brooklyn*, Jacqueline Woodson's first adult novel in twenty years is nothing short of remarkable. Her protagonist, August, is one of four girls coming of age in 1970s Brooklyn who become "always and all ways" friends until one by one

their lives take different turns. Woodson is able to convey so much with so little—her words and sentences are beautifully crafted to fill you with emotion and understanding in a single line that feels effortless and light. The girls’ lives move to the beat of disco rhythms, the chant of Double Dutch, and later the pleas of their boyfriends to do just this one thing—Their neighborhood is both lifeline and trap, as so many places are, and it’s hard to say for sure why some break the tether and others become what they once scorned. Another Brooklyn is a breathtaking account of growing up female and black in a time of conflicting pressures and crushing assumptions, and in doing so creating a lifetime of memories. --Seira Wilson, The Book Review --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Woodson brings us August, a first-person narrator akin to her own remembered self in her verse memoir for young people, *Brown Girl Dreaming*. In this novel, though, rather than focusing on how childhood foments a writer’s impulse, the author operates dual lenses in relating another brown girl’s experiences of becoming a woman in 1970s Brooklyn. August’s voice shifts easily from a wide-angled adult perspective, as she returns to Brooklyn after 20 years for her father’s funeral, into a telephoto clarity as she recalls her first sight of a magically joyful trio of neighborhood girls from the window of the third-floor apartment her father forbade her to leave after the family moved there from their rural Tennessee home. The adult August’s fierce remembrance makes poignant the isolation and novelty of a city life she must enter motherless, so desperate to be the fourth fast friend, to make a perfect quartet of the three who dazzle and need her. The solemn refrains in this poeticized prose sound like the changing colors and cadences of the borough: her family’s imperfect conversion to Islam, including August’s work to resolve her denial of her mother’s loss with a hijab-clad therapist; and the alluring yet dangerous navigation of the waters of girlhood toward the depths of sexual maturity. Teens of the searching sort, particularly those who have read the author’s works for younger readers, may find this offering evocative of what school reunions can reveal: the talented may fly too high in fame, the privileged may not always embrace their advantage, and some raise themselves up and out while others are lost to obscurity. In the character of August, Woodson brings tidbits of research on the funeral practices of world cultures to bear on this keen examination of her Brooklyn in its many incarnations. VERDICT Something to savor for the nearly grown who have acquired a taste for the complex and bittersweet flavor of memory. —Suzanne Gordon, Lanier High School, Gwinnett County, GA --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Running into a long-ago friend sets memory from the 1970s in motion for August, transporting her to a time and a place where friendship was everything—until it wasn't. For August and her girls, sharing confidences as they ambled through neighborhood streets, Brooklyn was a place where they believed that they were beautiful, talented, brilliant—a part of a future that belonged to them. But beneath the hopeful veneer, there was another Brooklyn, a dangerous place where grown men reached for innocent girls in dark hallways, where ghosts haunted the night, where mothers disappeared. A world where madness was just a sunset away and fathers found hope in religion.

**My Thoughts:** In the narrative voice of a young woman named August, we follow her journey back to Sweet Grove, Tennessee, and forward to Brooklyn in the 1970s. Memories and moments that seem to come in flashbacks are snippets out of time, revealing nostalgia and loss. A death, a missing mother, friendships that seem forever but then are not—all of it is seen from the character's adult perspective. Sometimes flashes come that signal fantasy, not reality. And then reality slams into her with all of its dangerous brutality. Dead bodies are discovered nearby; drug addicts hide in the hallways; and children disappear when white women come for them.

**Another Brooklyn: A Novel** is a panoramic view of a time, of dreams, and of how reality can turn grim—or hopeful. It snaps a portrait of growing up Girl in times that were a-changing.

4 stars.

Exquisite! Such a beautifully written piece of work, that it felt like poetry, both in the flow and the content. It has an ethereal dreamy quality and is full of rich metaphors. I have been struggling with my review of this book, because whatever I seem to write doesn't really do the book justice. It is such a unique beautiful piece of writing. The story begins with August, the narrator, returning by train to visit her dying father. She catches a glimpse of Sylvia, a childhood friend and memories come flooding back to her. The ethereal quality of the book has in part to do with the fact that the narrator is looking way back on an earlier part of her life; in part that she is remembering her childhood, one in which she could not comprehend or accept the death of her mother; and thirdly the poetic quality to the writing. The idea that August thinks her mother will return and convinces her younger brother of the same, feels so honest, so real, so a part of how children really cope with the loss of a parent. Within the book, different cultural rites of death are mentioned reminding the reader that death is there, but not letting us know the actual circumstances of the mother's death until later. Once August arrives in Brooklyn with her father and brother, the father cages the children in the house worried about the dangers of the outside world.

This backfires as her younger brother falls through the glass window injuring his arm in his attempts to watch the outside world. At this point, August and her brother are allowed outside to experience the world. August reminisces about her female friendships from this era in her life. She had developed a close-knit group of girlfriends who become her "home," her family, and this allows her feel alive again, after feeling cooped up in their Brooklyn apartment. Together these girls feel stronger and braver. Their friendship gives them a sense of safety, of home, of togetherness that is lacking from their home environments. They grow into puberty together, date, experiment with sex. They confide in each other, things that they do not feel safe confiding to their own parents. August's mother's words about not trusting female friendships keep echoing back to her. "Don't trust women, my mother said to me. Even the ugly ones will take what you thought was yours." August learns how this can be true as the friendships begin to slip and in some cases fracture. However, for a time, the friendships are a beautiful thing and allow the girls to feel powerful in a world where they are vulnerable, on account of being female, minorities and poor. This reflection is of Brooklyn in the 1970s in a neighborhood that is turning from white to black. While August finds comfort in her friendships, her father finds comfort in religion. It is a stunning look at this place and time period, the struggles these girls faced as they came of age and the hope and courage needed to face it. I highly recommend this to everyone.

Oh how I loved this book. Elegant, sparse, it read like a memoir that I wanted to go on forever. I kept forgetting that it was fiction. It's a book about memory, and August's memory did play a horrible yet needed trick on her. Another Brooklyn took place in the late 1970's and early 80's when I was a young woman who lived in Manhattan. Being white much of the book was familiar yet examined from other lenses. Things that were important to me weren't to August and her friends and vice versa but they were a decade younger and that too played a part. Her father turned into an important complicated character as was her younger brother. In some ways it reminded me of a book that's not a tenth as well written but was the most important book of my late childhood on---A Tree Grows in Brooklyn. I'm a compulsive reader but this is the first time in a long time I'm "reviewing" a book on .

J. Woodson writes as beautifully as a song. She uses memory and story to capture the life of August with her "sisters", Angela, Sylvia and Gigi. Her images are so strong, my own memories swelled up and came to life. It'll haunt me long after I'm done.

I loved the insight into a time and place which I have little experience My book group and I felt that it just needed a little more character development.

The writing was so beautifully crafted I hated to finish it. Friendship and coming of age of 4 girls and in Brooklyn.

Beautifully written coming of age story. The characters will stay with you long after you've finished the book.

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