

## **Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds**

When Will's older brother Shawn gets shot, Will knows it's his turn to follow the neighborhood Rules.

Rule Number 1: No crying.

Rule Number 2: No snitching.

Rule Number 3: Get revenge.

So he swallows his sadness, doesn't tell anyone what he's about to do, grabs his brother's gun, and gets on the elevator. He has to follow The Rules-- he has to kill who killed his brother. Until the 60 second elevator ride down seven floors changes his life forever.

I've never been a huge fan of books like this: poetry books or books that stretch a moment out for what seems to be a lifetime, yet *Long Way Down* hit me where it hurts. Perhaps it's because the protagonist is about my age, or perhaps because I don't know what I'd do if something like that happened to one of my siblings, but *Long Way Down* was raw, hurting, and it passed that on to me.

This is a deep book that explores language in a new way, but also explores a community that's very different from ours here. It approaches a dangerous inner-city lifestyle in a way that's understandable and relatable, even to someone like me who grew up in safe, small Eureka. It's a modern ghost story translated to free verse that will stick with you for a long time.

*Long Way Down* is a National Book Award Finalist and Newbery Medal Winner, as well as 2020 Abe Lincoln Award Winner. I'm going to rate it B-MA for language, heavy themes, and graphic descriptions of violence.