



# **The Snowy Day and the Art of Ezra Jack Keats (Jewish Museum)**

*Claudia J. Nahson*

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In 1962, Ezra Jack Keats's picture book *The Snowy Day* introduced readers to young Peter, the first African American protagonist in a full-color children's book, who traipsed alone through the snowy, wondrous sidewalks of New York City. The book was a runaway success, capturing the Caldecott Medal and selling more than two million copies. In *The Snowy Day* and subsequent books, Keats's awareness of the city, its daily hum, and the role of its children are deeply felt and delicately rendered in words and bright collages and paintings. He made a prominent place for characters and places that had not been represented in children's books, saying about Peter, "My book would have him there simply because he should have been there all along."

Coinciding with *The Snowy Day*'s 50th anniversary, the current publication features more than 75 illustrations alongside essays by Claudia Nahson and Maurice Berger, who discuss Keats's Jewish background, his advocacy of civil rights, his inventive art, and his wide-ranging influence.

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