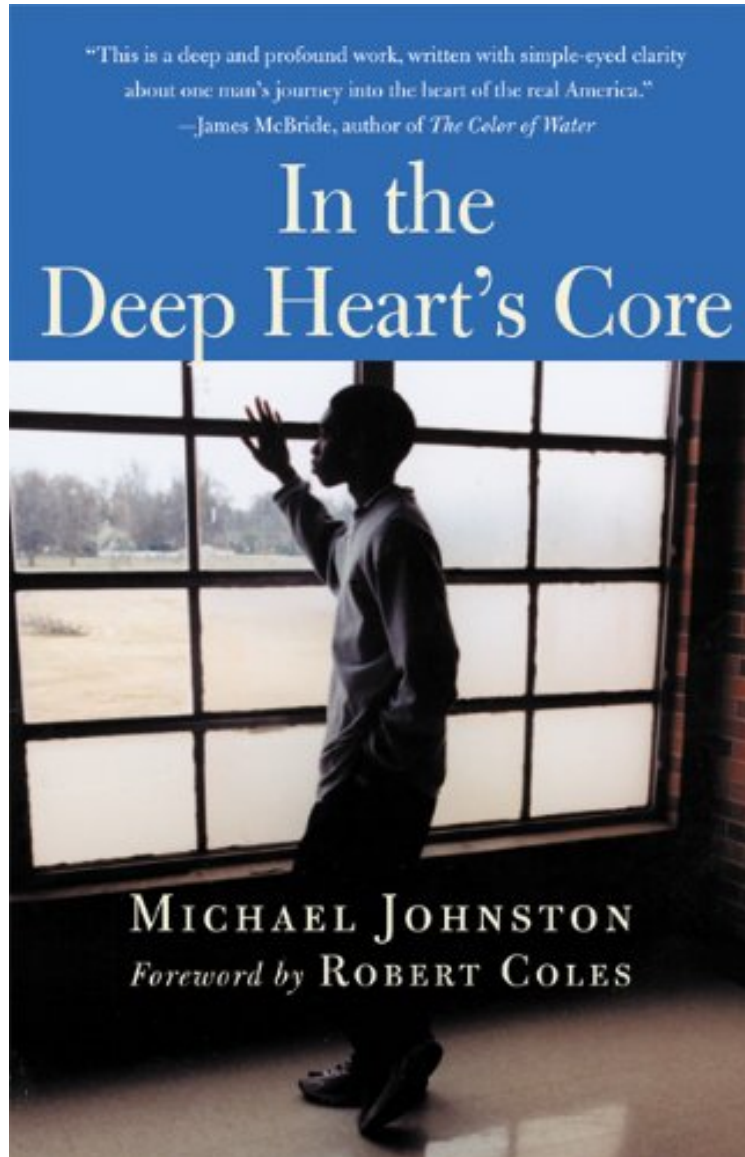


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## In the Deep Heart's Core

Michael Johnston, Robert Coles

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#638332 in Books Grove Press 2003-08-06Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.22 x .65 x 5.50l, .65 #File Name: 0802140246240 pages | File size: 19.Mb

**Michael Johnston, Robert Coles : In the Deep Heart's Core** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In the Deep Heart's Core:

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A Voice for StudentsBy Kevin JacobsonTwenty-two years old and fresh out of Yale, Michael Johnston, as a member of Teach for America, ventures to Greenville Mississippi to teach high school English. Greenville High School, like many other schools of its kind, has transformed from an all white

school in the 1960s and earlier, to now being predominately a poor black school. It is riddled with drugs, violence, teen pregnancy and lost hope. Johnston tells the stories of Greenville High's students over his two year period as a teacher there. He is able to get beneath the surface of stereotypes and develop an understanding and connection with his students, while learning what it means to truly "teach," while sharing in the triumphs and disappointments of his students. It is these battles that drive to the very core of the reader, filling them with a wave of emotions. He tells the story of a Chico, a star athlete with limitless possibilities who is courted by top colleges around the country, only to be swallowed by the same demons of hopelessness that claim so many of his peers. Johnston also tells the story of a promising young writer who is slowly being lured into the life of drugs and violence that fixates itself among these students' lives. Overall, a great read, and it reminded me of *Savage Inequalities*, which I read a few years back and which also moved me in many ways. Johnston has a soft and smoothing demeanor, and his passion for his students and education are expressed well throughout the book. This book does not present solutions, but is meant rather to tell the students stories, and to a degree help shed light on some of the problems we as America still face. These types of schools are far too common and often swept under the rug in America. To look at Greenville High's students in the eyes is to face the reality not just that our race problem is far from solved, but that it is in fact festering in these pockets of abandonment.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent book  
By Bahia Honda  
Having grown up near Greenville, I was interested in this "yankee's" take on the problems facing a poverty stricken area. The author describes his two years teaching English in Greenville High School without judgment, only with an outsiders eye. The author has a talent for description and observation, both coming through with excellent clarity. For anyone wanting insight into our public schools, this book is one that you must read.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. a must read for anyone contemplating working in the field ...  
By donald wilkinson  
a must read for anyone contemplating working in the field of special education...weeding out the faint of heart while underlining the power that can come when teachers persevere and truly connect with students, inspiring them to recognize and develop their potential.

In the *Deep Heart's Core* is the uplifting story of young Teach for America volunteer who becomes an English teacher in a desperately impoverished African-American high school in the rural Mississippi Delta beset by gang violence, drug abuse, ruptured families and teen pregnancy-but among the sorrow and struggle he finds dignity and hope, and works to bring the nascent intellectual curiosity of his students to full flower.

From Publishers Weekly  
Fresh from a postcollege, intensive five-week crash course, Johnston began his two-year stint with Teach for America, a program that addresses the needs of some of America's most desperate classrooms. In Johnston's case, it's a high school classroom in Greenville, Miss., with "chalkboards so scratched, rusted, and embedded with chalk dust that I couldn't read the boards even if I wrote on them with fresh white paint." There he teaches students who have been through "more funerals than honor roll assemblies" due to drugs and gang violence. The school system's countless institutional failures (among them, a counselor who sells high school credits) challenge Johnston's assurance that education was the "one valuable skill I could bring to Mississippi that she could use." The students' truancy, sexual promiscuity and aggression sorely test Johnston's conviction that "underneath, they were vulnerable... still children." Successes are minuscule and failure is rampant. What makes Johnston's account noteworthy is his ability to move beyond making generalizations about impoverished schools and students. Rather, he takes readers into the constricted and often doomed lives of individuals: Corelle catches up on months of work with a six-hour marathon, but drops out of school; "confident, gracious, and charismatic" Egina becomes the accidental victim of cross fire. Although Johnston occasionally catches sight of a "few students who were trying to work effectively," they occupy the periphery. "In making the Delta my home," he observes, "I found inside her a despair beyond any I could have imagined." That compassion, leavened with good sense, makes this honest and often painful account a moving, memorable call for action.

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From Library Journal  
A participant in Teach for America, which places teachers in needy areas throughout the country, recounts the program's 12-year history and its accomplishments. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.  
From Booklist  
Johnston arrived in the Mississippi Delta in 1997, having just joined the Teach for America program. As soon as he began to search for a house, he was confronted by the sharp racial divide in the area, and he shocked people by moving into a black neighborhood. In his first days at Greenville High School, he faced "ridicule, harassment, and jokes." Students defied him and refused to do their work or even show up for class. But gradually, Johnston began to exert some influence, introducing some of his most difficult students to chess and Frederick Douglass. Confronted with tragedy (Corelle's hopes of a good job were dashed, leading him to fall back into old behaviors and ultimately to quit school) and triumph (Marvin strove to score well on the ACT so that he could attend college), Johnston marveled at the tenacity of his students and the hope that flourished under even the most forbidding of circumstances. Johnston is both gifted and dedicated; his warm and moving memoir should be required reading for anyone who wants to teach.

Kristine Huntley  
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