

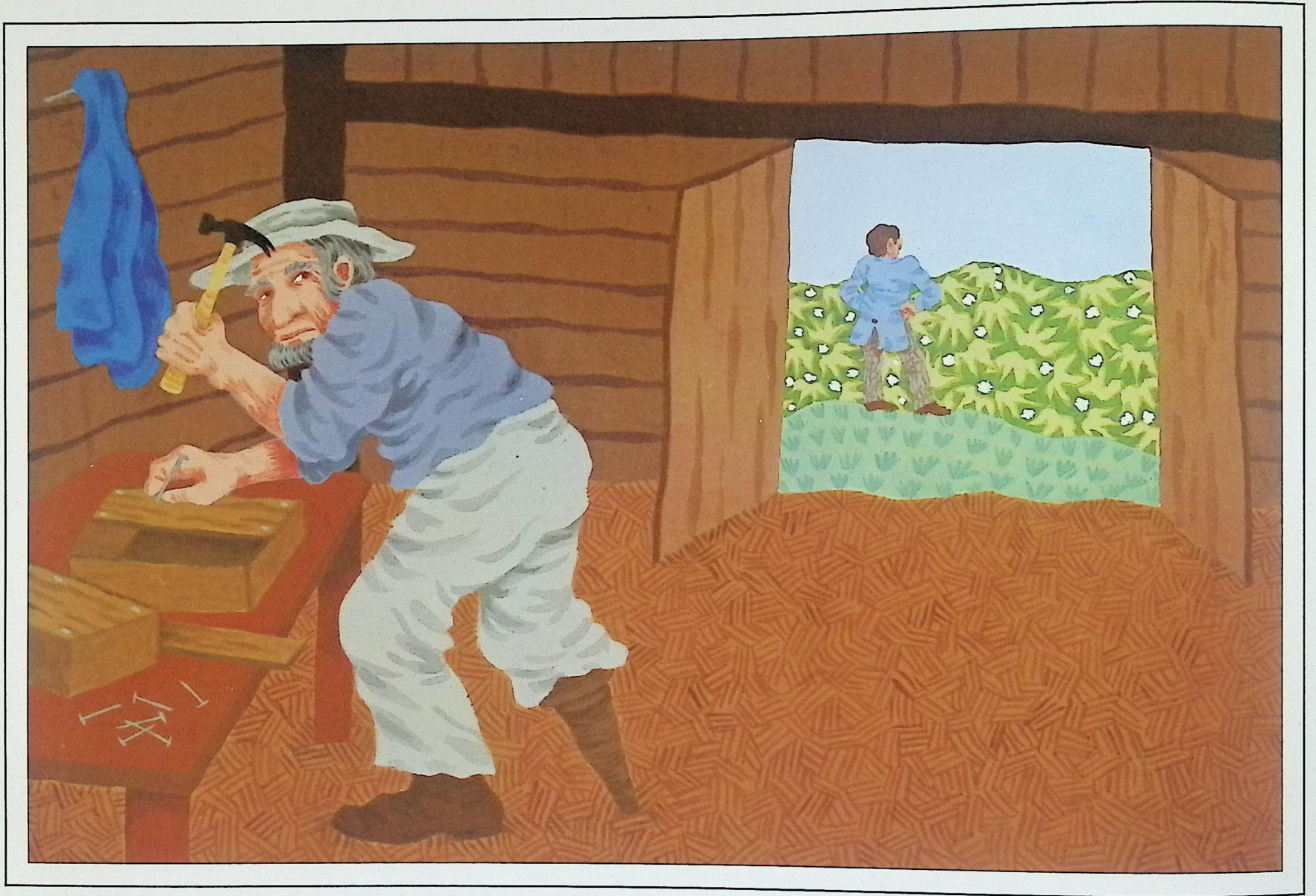
Follow **THE DRINKING GOURD**



STORY AND PICTURES BY JEANETTE WINTER



Long ago,
before the Civil War,
there was an old sailor called Peg Leg Joe
who did what he could to help free the slaves.



Joe had a plan.
He'd use hammer and nail and saw



and work for the master, the man
who owned slaves
on the cotton plantation.



Joe had a plan.

At night when work was done,
he'd teach the slaves a song
that secretly told the way
to freedom.

Just follow the drinking gourd, it said.



When the song was learned
and sung all day,
Peg Leg Joe would slip away
to work for another master
and teach the song again.

A quail called in the trees that night.
Molly and James remembered Joe's song.
They sang it low.

*When the sun comes back, and the first quail calls,
Follow the drinking gourd.
For the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom
If you follow the drinking gourd.*

They looked to the sky and saw the stars.





Taking their little son Isaiah,
old Hattie, and her grandson George,
Molly and James set out for freedom
that very night,
following the stars of the drinking gourd.



They ran all night through the fields,
till they crossed the stream to the woods.



When daylight came, they hid in the trees,
watching,
listening
for the master's hounds
set loose to find them.



But the dogs lost the runaways' scent
at the stream,
and Molly and James and Isaiah,
old Hattie and young George,
were not found.
They hid all day in the woods.

At night they walked again,
singing Joe's song
and looking for the signs
that marked the trail.

*The riverbank makes a very good road,
The dead trees will show you the way.
Left foot, peg foot, traveling on,
Follow the drinking gourd.*



Read to a Child!
THE MOST IMPORTANT 20 MINUTES OF YOUR DAY

*Walking by night, sleeping by day, for weeks they traveled on.
Sometimes berries to pick and corn to snatch, sometimes fish to catch,
sometimes empty bellies to sleep on. Sometimes no stars to guide the way.*

Hidden in the lyrics of a simple folk song sung by slaves were directions to the escape route known as the Underground Railroad—and freedom. In glowing paintings that evoke the American folk tradition and simple text inspired by slave narratives, Jeanette Winter tells the story of one brave family who followed the stars of the Drinking Gourd—the Big Dipper—and became free at last.

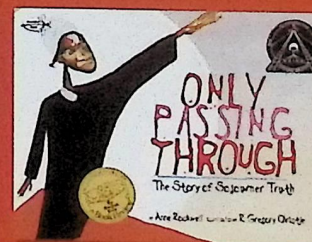
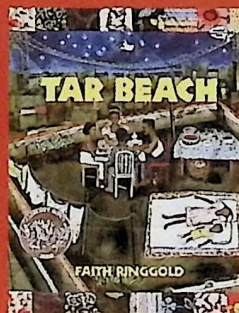
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“An extraordinary and inspiring tribute to a unique part of African American history.”—*The Boston Globe*

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