

Kilgour Dowdy, Joanne **Olympic Hero: Lennox Kilgour's Story**; illustrated by Dillon Sedar.

For her debut as a children's book author, Joanne Kilgour Dowdy pays tribute to a very close and dear person: her father. This perhaps accounts for the fact that Dowdy does not quite adhere to the standard characteristics of a biography, but instead moves between a presentational and literary mode which gives the book a surprising literary flair but also allows the author to foreground her emotional and deeply personal attachment to the theme: Dowdy presents the facts about the athlete's struggles and triumphs and preserves the changing atmosphere of the 1950s in which her father rose to fame as an Olympic medalist weightlifter. At the same time, through the book's unconventional format, its elliptical, poetic phrasing with the rhythmical repetitive style, and the abundance of metaphors, she captures the spirit of the athlete's determination, his drive and remarkable accomplishments, and, finally, reveals her own admiration and pride in those accomplishments.

Through her introduction to Lennox Kilgour's personality and his difficult journey to international success, Dowdy offers children a source of inspiration and motivation. Children will come to know the athlete's personality and his hard struggle to success and may look up to him as a model, a source of inspiration and motivation.

The meagre life conditions her father faced while preparing for the Olympic games are in complete contrast with the provisions professional athletes enjoy today. Hard training prevailed in Lennox Kilgour's life, a life spent in "training, pushing, lifting, snatching, pressing for the chance to grow strong confident and proud." Yet, his achievements and distinctions were not recognized with the publicity and support contemporary athletes expect and "Gour always was puzzled about this shoddy treatment."

Dillon Sedar's realistic illustrations add drama to the Olympic hero's pursuits. Also striking is Sedar's choice of format and the change of colors in each page, the fact that illustrations occupy the right-hand and the text the left-hand page, all of which contribute to the overall elegant appearance of the book, an endearing and heartfelt story of a courageous athlete.

Soula Mitakidou
10 March 2014