

Painting # 23

Museum of Modern Art, New York City, New York

Title: *Street Shadows*

Artist: *Jacob Lawrence*

(United States, Atlantic City, New Jersey)

Date of Painting: *1959*

(Style, Dynamic Cubism)

Jacob Lawrence is considered the best-known African American artist of the 1900s. He was the first African American painter to be featured at the prestigious Museum of Modern Art. He is a recipient of the U.S. National Medal of Art.

His parents divorced when he was seven. He was placed in a foster home. At age 13 he was reunited with his mother in the Harlem section of New York City. He first discovered his love of art when his mother enrolled him in an after school program. He dropped out of school at age 16 and found odd jobs. Realizing education was important, he started taking art classes at the Harlem Workshop. He completed art school, became a school teacher and later a college professor. He turned his life around. He first received national recognition at age 23 with his 60-panel set of paintings recognizing the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural south. Street Shadows depicts everyday life for these migrants and how they adapted to a Northern urban environment.