All Virgie wants is to go to school with her brothers George, Will, Nelson, Val, and C. C. But they keep saying she's too little for the long, seven-mile walk, and that girls don't need school. Well, Virgie doesn't agree, and she's not gonna let anything stand in her way.

My Personal Review:
Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys is notable for its subject matter and illustrations. The story concerns a young African-American girl in Post-Reconstruction Tennessee who hungers to follow her five older brothers to school; young African-American girls did not typically attend school during this time. The story is told in first person by one of the brothers, who is sympathetic to her cause. (Some of the brothers are against her accompanying them, and their comments add tension to the story--will their predictions come true?) The illustrations, watercolors by E.B. Lewis, provide an engaging yet gentle way into the text. The book provides a story interesting to young school age kids (is it possible that kids could actually yearn to be able to go to school?), and also an avenue to talking about social history. As a linguist, I especially liked the respectful yet accurate depiction of Black English Vernacular, which lends the book an evocative note. The book is officially recommended for ages 4-8. Because of the history theme I would extend that to ten year olds.

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