

Synopsis

Today my name is colorful. Yesterday my name was dead souls. Tomorrow my name will be lively spirits. My friends think my name is fire. The police think my name is burden. My parents think my name is symphony. Secretly I know my name is anything I want it to be. *Paint Me Like I Am* is a collection of poems by teens who have taken part in writing programs run by a national nonprofit organization called WritersCorps. To read the words of these young people is to hear the diverse voices of teenagers everywhere. Included are a foreword by acclaimed poet Nikki Giovanni, an essay from Kevin Powell, another poet associated with WritersCorps, and writing tips from WritersCorps instructors. WritersCorps was started in 1994 to help at-risk youth in three American urban centers: San Francisco, Washington, DC, and New York City (the Bronx). Thousands of children and teenagers have since benefited from finding creative expression through writing.

Book Information

Paperback: 144 pages

Publisher: HarperTeen; 1 edition (February 18, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0064472647

ISBN-13: 978-0064472647

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.4 x 7.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (14 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #290,150 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #35 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Poetry](#) #73 in [Books > Teens > Education & Reference > Language Arts > Composition & Creative Writing](#) #509 in [Books > Teens > Social Issues](#)

Customer Reviews

To be honest, I felt rather bored while reading, "Paint Me Like I Am." Being thirteen, I was quickly compelled to assume from the start that I was going to immediately relate to every poem, and every word written. From reading the description, I had been familiarized with the book as, "True, honest, and real teens with real issues." The only issues I found were temporary broken hearts from relationships. A lot of the material was repetitive, I found many lines copied from famous movies, or books. These poems many unfortunate grammar turn-ups, which made the composition some what confusing and un-flattering. Juvenile would be an understatement, as most of these young inexperienced, first time poets talked of how terrible their lives were, and how the boy they liked

would never like them. Some poems were good. I shouldn't lie about that. As one boy expresses his fear of his step dad, through saying the F word only about twenty times, it was at times difficult to grasp any such meaning of the writing, but his story stayed in your mind for a good while. If I am correct, "Paint Me Like I am" was created by Writers Corps, a corporation which is stationed in three different cities in America. Their main goal is to help children and teens find their "creative side in writing." These children have gone through hard-times, and tough childhoods. These kids seem to have utterly terrible life-altering stories to tell. Unfortunately though, through the failed attempts to rhyme, and the general loss of words, their poems, in my opinion, would have been better off as a bunch of short stories.-Nicole

I'm 16 yrs. old and I absolutely love this book of poems. There isn't really a subject that a teenager would bring up or think about that isn't in Paint Me Like I Am. It even gives you activities you can do with poetry. I would give this book to anyone, it to me is even a book that most adults would even enjoy I know for a fact that my mom loves it!

I love the idea behind the book. WritersCorps helps at-risk students in urban schools to express themselves through writing. Much of the writing is beginner-ability, a few are truly great pieces of poetry. One of my favorite aspects of the book is the writing prompts that WritersCorps offers periodically throughout the text.

In her foreword, award-winning poet Nikki Giovanni urges readers to remember that: We need poetry... We deserve poetry We owe it to ourselves to recreate ourselves And find a different if not better way to live WritersCorps has been bringing poetry and literacy to at-risk youth in Bronx, NY, Washington D.C. and San Francisco since 1994. The poems in this collection show some of the writing exercises used and vivid examples of excellent poetry from many of the youths in the program. Anyone interested in writing should begin with this book. The exercises invite creative expression through a writing journal, imagining oneself in a room and describing feelings, among other activities. While writers will find plenty to inspire them, reading through the poetry from the WritersCorps teens will leave no one untouched. Stories of pain leap from the carefully chosen words of poetry in titles about immigration, fights and abuse. Also strong are examples of hope, celebration of nature, friends and life. Everyday tales of hip-hop shoes, friends, jazz and dirty hands are also included. It's all there. From the title poem by Delia Garcia, San Francisco: Can you see the face telling you paint me happy, Paint me with life, but most of all Paint me free. --- Reviewed by Amy

Alessio

Paint Me Like I Am features the teen poems selected from the over 40,000 people who have participated in the WritersCorp program. Centered in San Francisco, Washington D. C. and New York, WritersCorps is a program that encourages established poets to share their skills and motivation in improving the lives of economically disadvantaged youths. Having started in 1994, WritersCorps had a large field of poems to choose from and the quality and breadth of poems reflects its broad base. The poems do reflect teen issues such as young love, angst and struggles with authority figures, but they also reflect larger poetic issues such as love of family, nature and place in the universe. The quality of writing in this volume is very high. In addition, the volume is decorated with light grey backgrounds that vary from graffiti to faces. There is a strong introduction by world class poet Nikki Giovanni and quotations and poetic tips by famous authors throughout. With its strong, contemporary urban feel and high quality writing, Paint Me Like I Am is highly recommended for all poetry collections and should be strongly considered for any teen section.

This book filled with inspiring poems helped me a great deal to get a new bright perspective in life. It talked about life and friends. Highly recommend it to any teen wanting to read poems to explore his or herself.

One of my favorite poetry books to teach youth positive expression through poetry. My copy is well used and worn out with love. I truly enjoyed the poems of the youth in this book and have used the section exercises in my own workshops on more than one occasion.

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