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CELEBRATING 75 YEARS AS THE NATION'S PREMIER INDEPENDENT BOOK REVIEW JOURNAL

BEST BOOKS
of 2008

Taylor, Keren
LISTEN TO ME:
Shared Secrets from WriteGirl
WriteGirl Publications
(282 pp.)
\$19.95
Jan. 1, 2009
ISBN: 978-0-9741251-6-9

“This is what you don’t know about me:/ I gossip—It’s terrible, but I love that it’s terrible,” writes 18 year-old Jessica. These “shared secrets” written by teenagers and their adult mentor-volunteers with WriteGirl, a creative-writing organization for teen writers, are accessible, honest expressions offered in a variety of genres. Sixteen sections (“The Voice Inside,” “When Scares were Stories,” “Close to Home,” etc.) organize these pieces by theme. An additional section of “Writing Experiments” suggests ideas and models for generating writing. What’s significant about this collection of unpretentious writing is that the creative process is laid bare: Pieces provide a glimpse of the authors at work and their inspirations—snippets of conversations that provoked writing, deeply felt feelings that needed permission for expression. While honest voices are evident, sophisticated readers may question the occasional lack of polish or unique use of language and might wonder whether these writers really took their efforts far enough. Still, for reluctant teen readers who are also unmotivated writers, there’s a wealth of inspiration here.
(Anthology. 12 & up)

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