



VOICE OF YOUTH ADVOCATES

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those who serve young adults*

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Listen to Me: Shared Secrets from WriteGirl.

Karen Taylor, Ed. WriteGirl Publications, 2009.
304p. \$19.95 Trade pb. 978-0-9741251-6-9. Index.
Illus.

Since its founding in December 2001, Los Angeles-based WriteGirl, a nonprofit creative-writing organization for teens, has published a yearly anthology, held scores of readings and other events, and partnered hundreds of girls with mentors. Remarkably the organization has seen one hundred percent of its participants finish high school and go to college. In the program, teen girls are paired with author-mentors who provide them with the support and skills needed to produce poetry, screenplays, short stories, novels, memoirs, and songs. Both mentors and teens contribute to this latest anthology of pieces ranging from the hilarious to the heartbreaking.

The short prose and verse selections are by turns raw, crackling with energy, naïve, knowing, and, above all, deeply personal, revealing the inner lives of strong but vulnerable females. Amazingly the pieces never descend into the merely tawdry or sentimental. Like all good literary works, these writings leave the reader wanting more, such as to read the rest of the memoir that begins, "I got shot last night." or other verses by the author of the poem ending, "and no one will ever call me Lily." **WriteGirl's wonderful, inspirational anthology belongs in every media center, public library, and creative writing class.**

- Jamie S. Hansen