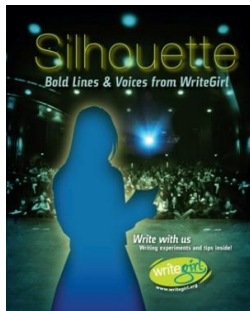




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Elfrieda Abbe, Publisher



WriteGirl: Encouraging writing and self-expression in teen girls

It's pretty easy to get worked up about the state of literacy and writing these days. The lament goes something like: "Young people don't read, and they certainly don't write." Such refrains can easily devolve into a sort of "what's the use" frame of mind. That's why it's so heartening to read about a program that mentors and encourages young writers.

I recently received a copy of *Silhouette: Bold Lines and Voices from WriteGirl*, the sixth anthology published by WriteGirl. The book is inspiring on a couple of levels. First, it features the writings of more than 120 girls from diverse backgrounds, who participated in the Los Angeles based WriteGirl workshops. (You may have read about the organization in the April 2007 issue of *The Writer*). Second, [WriteGirl](http://www.writegirl.org) is a great model for writers and teachers who are looking for ways to improve literacy and to help teens become successful through writing. The high school graduation and college admission rate for participants is 100%. Here's how it works. The teens are paired with professional women writers for one-on-one writing sessions and group workshops. All forms of creative writing result: poetry, fiction, songs and essays.

The anthology also is a useful tool for teachers. Along with their poem, essay or story, each student describes what inspired the piece, which can serve as a prompt for others. The last chapter "Skip Play Run Jump" offers exercises and prompts, such as: "Create the voiceover for a movie trailer about something unusual that happened to you, or that you want to have happen to you. Write in short, dramatic phrases." "Use a sense other than sight to tell a personal story about a place. It could be a place you've visited or a place you'd like to forget."

Silhouette will be released in Jan. 2010. Earlier anthologies are available at www.writegirl.org. The proceeds go to the program.