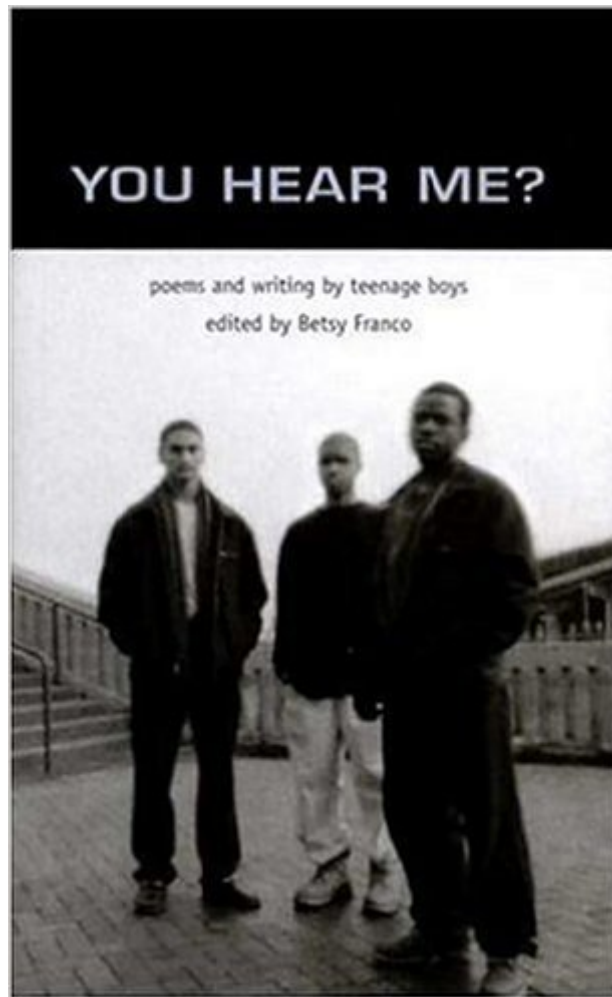


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# You Hear Me: Poems And Writing By Teenage Boys



## Synopsis

Teenage boys speak outâ ”without the filter of adult sensibilityâ ”in a compelling collection of poetry and prose. In a powerful collection of more than seventy uncensored poems and essays, more than fifty teenage boys from across the country explore their many-layered concerns: identity, love, envy, gratitude, sex, anger, competition, fear, hope. Here, unadorned and without the filter of adult sensibility, is the raw stuff of their lives, in their own words. Isnâ™t it time to listen?

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (17 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #600,499 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #34 inÂ Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing > Poetry #83 inÂ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Poetry #181 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Literary Criticism & Collections

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

I work with an online magazine with teenage writing as the primary content. When I got my hands on a copy of this book, I thought it was right up my alley, and it was. I never expected the quality and scope of the selections. Some of the poetry is so unbelievably striking--let's just say that this book is not just for teens. Readers of many ages will appreciate it. I really loved it, and I'm even considering reviewing it for my zine.

I'm a high school teacher. I ordered this book, along with Things I have To Tell You, to use in my classes. In regards to most of the negative reviews: I'm not sure why middle school teachers would order this; teenage boys wrote it. Also, I think it's time people woke up and realized that children of most ages do swear, and people do talk about sex (yes, even when using an orange as a

metaphor). Nobody really complains about dead, white authors swearing or using appalling language (Twain, Hemmingway, Conrad, anyone?). The king of all writers, Shakespeare, is probably the most inappropriate writer I've ever read. Here's the deal with this book: some poems are outstanding, and some poems are a bit ridiculous. I will probably use a few of the poems in my lessons, but there were some that probably needed more focus and imagery. A lot of the poems were very "teenager-y", meaning that they have something to say, but can not quite pull it off in poetry format. As a teacher, I would say "go for it", and use some of the poems while ditching the others. If you're the parent of a teenage boy, go for it. They will have something to identify with.

although i acted as a consultant for this book and thus had some familiarity with its contents before publication, i was pretty unprepared for how beautiful and effective the finished product was when it arrived in the mail. It's a jewel, from its restrained and lyrical cover photo to its soulful content --poems, stories and essays by teenage boys from around the country. My personal faves include Fred Brown's "The Bus Stop," a choppy, minimalist anecdote about a neighborhood domestic altercation with a knockout last line worthy of Hemingway or Raymond Carver; Rigo Landin's "Ode to My Hair Tail," in which a carefully-tended object of personal adornment becomes, in the final stanza, a spiritual offering; Kenny Weiss's "I Hate School," a brilliant all-out assault on verbal decorum and the social rules it helps to maintain; Seth Chappell's "Does My Mother Look Like This?", a wistfully speculative love-poem to THE most important missing person in the world; and countless others. This book is an activist intervention into all the current talk by "experts" \*about\* boys; it short-circuits all the static of debate by bringing boys' creativity and soulfulness to the fore and letting them speak for themselves. Already the book is being used in group-home workshops to inspire boys in serious need of speaking and being heard; I can't think of a better affirmation of its power than this, its use as a tool against despair and creative waste. Few books achieve such a perfect harmony of artistic and social value. This book is where it's at, and I'm happy to have had even a small role in its development. (If you think this review represents a conflict of interest, check out the book and judge for yourself!)

This book is a genuine, heartfelt, and very honest portrait of teenagers in urban America. There are those, no doubt, who will be offended by its explicit language and subject matter. Nevertheless, explicit language is one of the hallmarks of teenagers grappling with issues of sexuality, drug use, disability, and a myriad of complex social relationships. This book will not expose teenagers to issues with which they are unfamiliar - despite its language, it will not taint innocent minds. Rather, it

will model a healthy way (writing poetry) to grapple with the questions most teenagers face as they navigate the difficult path to adulthood.

This poetry book edited by Betsey Franco is an excellent book. The poetry is written by teenage boys. The writing is freeverse. The boys tell their emotions which consists of sad, happy, and hurt feelings. They write about things that are important to them like , how they were abused mentally and physically, how they didn't have girlfriends, and about secrets they never told any one. Over all it was a five star book. I liked this book because I could relate to it.

There are some incredibly gifted writers included in this book. Quantedius Hall, Shysuaune Taylor, Todd VanDerWerff, Stephan Johnson, Timothy Arevalo - WOW! I hope they continue to write and publish their work, because many people have been touched by their words.

Fridays are poetry days in my classroom. Every few weeks, I pull out this book, or Things I Have to Tell You, and read a poem or two. Time and again, boys will approach me after class and ask to borrow the book. These poems say to kids what Whitman, Frost (sorry--you know I love you, Robert) and Tennyson just can't. Kids must speak to kids. These books assure tentative nascent poets that they can do it, too, and they deliver a strong peer message to kids who are struggling. Betsy Franco has done a great thing here.

It's nice that a book can share writings by teenage boys so all can read about their pain or praise, but I was dumbfounded to see that several writings were included that had terrible language. I research books before I purchase them, and not one review mentioned the bad language. I have had this book in my library for several years, but just recently found the language. I am withdrawing it right away.

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