

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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Dream Catchers: An Inspiring and Enlightening Collection of Poems, Stories, and Artwork by Youth Impacted by Mass Incarceration.

Ed. by Amy Friedman and Dennis Danziger

2021. 224p. illus. Out of the Woods, paper, \$17.95 (9781952197062). Gr. 9–12

In a collection of more than 150 original pieces created by members of POPS (Pain of the Prison System) the Club around the country, high-school students express their sorrow, confusion, anger, bewilderment, hopes, and dreams through poetry, essays, haiku, rap lyrics, drawings, paintings, photos, and collages. They tell stories that reflect different circumstances and experiences, but all reflect the pain of having an incarcerated parent, sibling, or loved one. The project began in Venice, California, in 2013, and this is the seventh volume of their work. The many contributions range in sophistication from filled-out template statements to aching original imagery, and while there's hardly any swearing, many of the brutally honest, wrenchingly painful reflections address adult themes: drugs, gangs, self-harm, verbal and physical abuse, gender identification, and sexual preference. Originally envisioned as a safe place for teens to express their emotions and find validation, it's increasingly obvious that these POPS the Club communities deserve wider recognition. While the collection is sometimes tough to read, these are voices that deserve to be heard.

— *Kathleen McBroom*