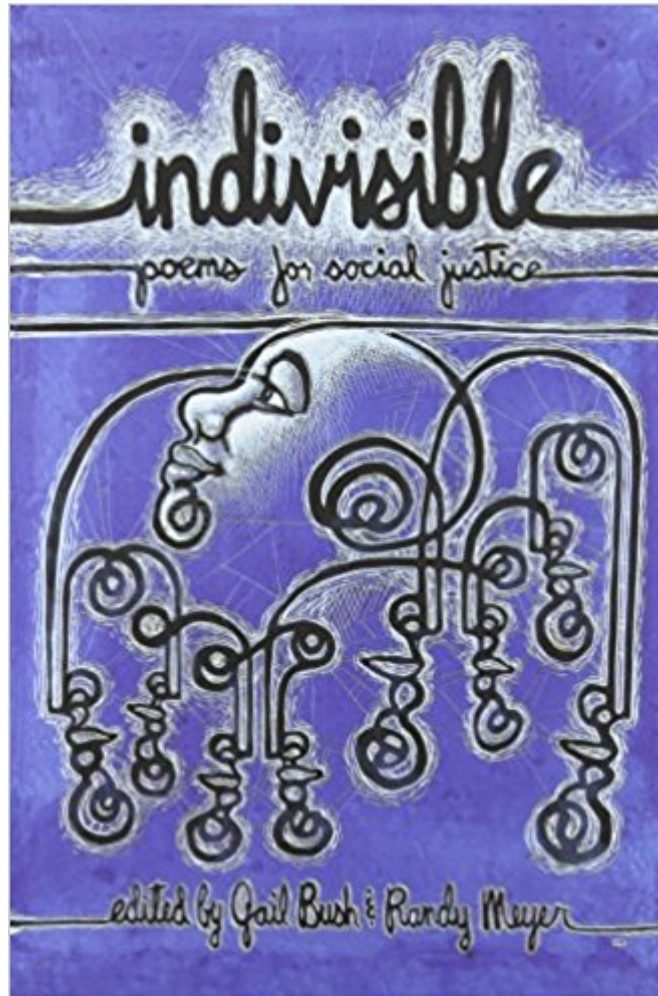




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Indivisible: Poems For Social Justice



Synopsis

"Anthology including over 50 works of poetry by 20th century writers on issues related to social justice in American society. Foreword by COMMON"--

Book Information

Paperback: 94 pages

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 8 - 12

Customer Reviews

Gr 7 Up-A quote from Lincoln expressing faith in "the ultimate justice of the people" ushers in this collection of poems, while another from Whitman as to our "common indivisible destiny" marks its end. These are poems for, not just about, social justice, selected and arranged to inspire readers to action. In keeping with this bold mission, the selections are divided into five sections, intentionally orchestrated to help young people look at the American experience from different angles. In the first section, "liberty was misquoted," the poems call into question our oft-insular mindset and misguided interpretations of "other." By collection's end, however, the poems focus on "the next thing to happen," a space where teens may be moved to ponder what kinds of roles they will be bold enough to take up in this world. Yet whether readers take the intended journey or simply dip in and out, selecting a poem here or there, the impact is the same. Each poem (selections from both lesser- and well-known American poets are included) can stand strongly on its own. From Langston Hughes and Amiri Baraka to Joy Harjo and Toi Derricotte, the poets discuss perspective, misguided pity, stereotyping, patriarchy, and thousands of other sticky issues. This carefully selected collection is not only poetically breathtaking, but will undoubtedly prove useful time and again as we seek to

provide resources for educating empathetic global citizens.-Jill Heritage Maza, Montclair Kimberley Academy, Montclair, NJ (c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

In their introduction to this unique, timely collection, the coeditors write, "These poems have been selected and arranged and offered to the reader as our contributions to living in a more socially just America." To that end, they have selected 54 previously published works by twentieth-century poets. The work represents a broad variety of races, cultures, and ethnicities and deals with such issues as bigotry and injustice, as well as with freedom, equality, and comity. Divided into five sections, the poems essentially chart a course from outside our culture to an inside where we can celebrate common dreams. The contributors range from the celebrated "Billy Collins, Ishmael Reed, Pat Mora, William Stafford" to the lesser known, and brief biographies of all are included in an appendix. Matthew Thomas Bush's elegantly decorative line drawings illustrate the pages without overwhelming the selections, and a foreword from rap artist Common will help draw more attention to this thought-provoking anthology for classroom sharing, broad discussion, and individual appreciation. Grades 7-12. --Michael Cart

I was aware, some years ago, that a poetry collection was being worked on. I'm so pleased with the results. I find Matthew's illustrations to be lyrical.

A must-have for middle grade and high school social justice curriculum.

"America is not easy." Those are the words the editors use to open their introduction to this stunning, brilliantly crafted collection of poetry. The poems in this anthology grapple with the failed promise of the American democratic project and what that has meant for various communities. A wonderful mix of writers from Tupac Shakur to Toi Derricotte, Assotto Saint, and Pat Mora are featured. The writers boldly critique ableism, sexism, racism, queer antagonism, class-based discrimination, and other forms of marginalization and exclusion that have marked (and continued to mark) American political and social life. That this collection was assembled especially for children in middle school and high school is very important. To be honest, I see no reason why elementary school children should be excluded from the target audience; we know that children not only comprehend but also reproduce behaviors that perpetuate inequality at an early age. All too often primary and secondary education curricula approach American history and literature with reverence

and limitless praise. There is very little recognition of the glaring contradictions that marked the nation's founding and shaped its present. There is very little of the erasure and marginalization that has disenfranchised some communities for centuries. As such, we need collections like these. They are deeply instructive for people of all ages, but especially necessary for young minds. The earlier we work to decolonize education and encourage critical reflectiveness, the better. I strongly recommend this anthology. I received an e-galley of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

When I think of Norwood House Press, I think about *Dear Dragon* or other books for preschool aged children. This is what was in my mind when I started reading this book. I soon realized that this was not the case. This book is geared more toward late middle school and high school, but I think that adults should read it too. This is an anthology of 50 or so poems based on social injustices in the United States. These injustices include discrimination based on color, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, as well as the struggle for equality and justice. In school, I struggled through all poetry sections in English classes, and I'm pretty sure I made a joke out of them. While reading this book, I loved the free form of most of the poems, which made it a bit easier to read. Some of them, I am still not sure what I was supposed to get out of them, but others made me look inside myself, to see what I could be doing better. Everyone could do better! Thank you Norwood House Press and NetGalley for the digital ARC of this book, which made this honest review possible.

The anthology includes more than fifty short poems written by famous and less known poets from the twentieth century, and handled many sensitive issues like race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc., and the fight for equality and justice for all Americans. The collection intended to show another angle of the American society where some people still strive to achieve the American dream of freedom and equal living. The short but powerful and meaningful poems make the reader reevaluate his/her biases and role, and challenge him/her to be a part of the struggle toward achieving complete justice for everyone. Also, the illustrative drawings give a very artistic touch to the book and along with the poems, create an elegant enjoyable experience. This is a light and inspiring read, really enjoyable especially if you love poetry, and if you don't, you still should give it a try.

This thoughtfully edited collection will wow poetry lovers and may entice those who think they really don't like to read poems. The first enticement is the cover illustration itself. It is bold, complex and

musical-- like the pages to follow. There are many poets I know but the new names held their own with the very famous. Every page is a fresh experience tied together by their diverse voices and similar yearnings. As a former teacher, I wish every high school student in America could hear these powerful voices tell their stories. This is an encounter of the third kind: contact.

This is a powerful collection poems. Often painful or raw, always beautiful, this remarkable range of poets explores the themes of social justice in our world today. Beautiful artwork by Matthew Bush adds to the lyrical beauty of this amazing, powerful book. This should be added to any library poetry collection and definitely all high school libraries.

This anthology--a powerful and lyrical look at social justice in America--packs a punch. I know I will be picking it up to read again ... and again.

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