

## **Booklist Review**

The hottest trend in YA literature is the renaissance of realistic fiction. Here, as further evidence, is a collection of 12 stories rooted in realism. Well, one of the stories, Stephen Emond's illustrated tale *The Night of the Living Creeper* is narrated by a cat, but, otherwise, here are some examples: Jason Schmidt's visceral story of a school shooting; Kekla Magoon's tale of a mixed-race girl trying to find a place she belongs; Marcella Pixley's operatic entry of a mother's mental illness; and Patrick Flores-Scott's haunting take on a brother's life-changing sacrifice. Happily, not all of the stories portray reality as grim. Some, like Kristin Elizabeth Clark's gay-themed coming-out story, Jordan Sonnenblick's older-but-wiser romance, and Faith Erin Hicks' graphic-novel offering about gay teens, are refreshingly lighthearted and sweet spirited. Many of the authors in this fine collection are emerging talents and their stories are, for the most part, successful. One of their characters laments how some don't want to know about what goes on in the real world. This collection shows them.--Cart, Michael Copyright 2015 Booklist

## **Publisher's Weekly Review**

Aiming to shine a light on the virtues of stories about real teens living in the real world, this collection features 12 tales from writers including Trisha Leaver, Kekla Magoon, James Preller, and Marcella Pixley. It's a solid concept, but the sheer brevity of the entries-most are 25 pages or so-doesn't always give them a chance to shine and can reduce the characters to their situations, in stories about unexpected pregnancy, a domineering boyfriend, school shootings, and sexual identity. Amid the prose offerings are two illustrated entries: like his novels, Stephen Emond's "The Night of the Living Creeper" mixes sequences of text and artwork (and happens to be narrated by a cat); Faith Erin Hicks's untitled graphic short, set at an end-of-high-school pool party, captures the thrilling promise of new experiences, romantic and otherwise. Patrick Flores-Scott's "The Good Brother," about twins dealing with their immigration status, creates both a crisis situation and distinctive characters. While these stories can be a mixed bag, readers may well be enticed to seek out the contributors' longer work. Ages 14-up. (Jan.) © Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

## **School Library Journal Review**

Gr 10 Up-Tackling feelings-from grief to joy, from sorrow to hope, and from loss to love-this short story collection portrays real emotions of teenagers in real-life situations. Included in this volume are the conversation a girl has with herself while preparing to break up with an emotionally manipulative boyfriend, the story of a survivor of a high school shooting, an illustrated vignette told from the perspective of a family's cat about a creeper at a Halloween party, and a short work in comic book format about the surprising secret of a high school's golden couple. Some of the standouts include "Coffee Chameleon" by Jay Clark, about an Adderall addict and his ex-girlfriend; "Hush" by Marcella Pixley, the story of the daughter of one of America's earliest AIDS victims who lives with her mentally fragile mother in a falling-down house; and "The Good Brother" by Patrick Flores-Scott, which contains the line that provides this volume's title. With authors as diverse as Heather Demetrios, Trisha Leaver, Kekla Magoon, and Jordan Sonnenblick, this collection unflinchingly addresses subjects such as sexuality, abortion, addiction, school shootings, and abuse.  
VERDICT From beginning to end, this is a compelling work that looks at the reality teens are faced with today.-Heather M. Campbell, formerly at Philip S. Miller Library, Castle Rock, CO © Copyright 2015. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.