



Crush: Love Poems for Teenagers

Kwame Alexander

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From Kwame Alexander, the 2015 Newbery Medalist, a collection of poetry for young people. **STARRED REVIEW:** Gr 8 Up: Alexander offers a cosmopolitan menu of tanka, haiku, long titles that lead into short first lines, verbal formulas that lead to sung discoveries, French phrases, prose poems, and poems written in Spanglish. The book is divided into three sections with various speakers, and a fourth section that includes poems by Sherman Alexie, Pablo Neruda, Nikki Giovanni, and the title poem, "Crush," by Naomi Shihab Nye. A poem in the first section, "What Makes Me Feel Good," begins with one word, "isn't/the way you style your hair or/how all the other girls stare/it's not even the way you kneel/in church, unafraid of prayer...." Many of the poems lend themselves to pairing with the classics. In "He Says He Loves Me," the speaker responds to her paramour's advances (think Marvel's finessing in "To His Coy Mistress"). When he tells her he has "protection," she asks "does he have enough of it/To guard my heart/To give shelter to my soul/in case of emergency." This well-crafted anthology will capture the interest of teens and possibly encourage them to submit their own "crush" poems to an appended Web site for a contest. Teresa Pfeifer, Alfred Zanetti Montessori Magnet School, Springfield, MA --School Library Journal (10/2007)

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