

We Are Here to Stay: Voices of Undocumented Young Adults

Susan Kuklin

Candlewick Press (Jan 8, 2019)

Hardcover \$19.99 (192pp)

978-0-7636-7884-5

We Are Here to Stay collects the compelling stories of young adults who live, undocumented, in the United States.

These stories are not political; they impart the experiences of real children who had little say when they came to the United States from all over the world: from Ghana, Colombia, Mexico, Korea, and Independent Samoa.

Each chapter is devoted to an individual and their family. One child, J, came at thirteen—he believed for a better education, though he was actually being trafficked. Other families came for work and chose to stay when their jobs ended, and still others came to escape the dangers of their home countries. Violence is recalled: one child was shot while playing outside; another's brother was found and deported, only to be killed by a drug cartel.

There are striking similarities between the stories. The featured children live with the fear of being discovered and deported to countries that are no longer familiar. Nevertheless, each is driven to succeed, and each holds on to an idea of the American dream.

Given ongoing uncertainty about the future of DACA, the book has removed the names of everyone interviewed as well as identifying photographs. In their places are blank pages and frames. These empty pages are haunting, emphasizing the fear that the children live with, even as their stories address the importance of bringing their experiences out of hiding.

A brief section at the end includes explanations of the acts and reforms that have affected immigration throughout US history. This information is useful for understanding the legal difficulties that people who want to come to the US face.

We Are Here to Stay is an important book for anyone concerned about the issues surrounding undocumented immigrants.

CATHERINE THURESON (January/February 2019)

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