

Concrete Rainbow

author: Jason Quinn

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Synopsis

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In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Hawaii was ground zero for the crystal meth epidemic in the United States. While tourists have mostly been shielded from witnessing the carnage, crystal meth has wreaked havoc on the people of Hawaii like few other places in the world. On the surface, the novel *Concrete Rainbow* is the coming-of-age story of a troubled boy caught up in the horrors of drugs and crime. But underneath, it is a meditative study of human behavior, the nuances of cultural identity, and the effects of trauma and abuse on children in a callous society.

Concrete Rainbow focuses on Byron, an angry bi-racial 15-year-old poet, and Kimo, a native Hawaiian felon who is part crime boss, part philosopher. As the two fight their way through the contrasting landscape of O`ahu during the crystal meth epidemic in the early '90s, they find that they share an unspeakable trauma. Through Byron's poetry, humor, violence, and gut-wrenching honesty, author Jason Quinn not only describes the dark parts of Hawaii that tourists rarely see, he describes the darkest parts within us all.

There was another phenomenon that was taking Hawaii by storm in the 1980s and 1990s: rap and hip hop. While troubled, Byron also is a deeply reflective and talented poet. Byron uses those gifts to try to make sense of the chaos around him and the monster within, resulting in insightful poetry and ultra hardcore head bangers.

Reader's comments

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