

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

# When You Never Said Goodbye by Meg Kearney

"[A] brave,  
beautiful story."  
—JACQUELINE  
WOODSON



## *When You Never Said Goodbye*

*An Adoptee's Search for Her Birth Mother*

*A Novel in Poems and Journal Entries*

*Meg Kearney*



A Karen and Michael Braziller Book  
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This Teacher's Guide focuses on poetic and narrative elements of *When You Never Said Goodbye* and supplements "A Guide to the Poetics of *When You Never Said Goodbye*," which is available at [www.perseabooks.com](http://www.perseabooks.com) and at [megkearney.com](http://megkearney.com).

It offers reading and writing exercises that can be used in high school and college classrooms. As author of the novel, the Guide to Poetics, and this Teacher's Guide, Meg Kearney welcomes feedback and questions from teachers and students. Contact her through her web site, [www.megkearney.com](http://www.megkearney.com).

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# INTRODUCTION

## WHY A NOVEL IN VERSE?

Few literary forms embrace as many subgenres or cover as many subject areas as the novel in verse. Biography, memoir, science, health, history, and social issues are all found and explored in contemporary verse narratives. It was Karen Hesse who paved the way for this genre with her 1997 Newbery Award-winning verse novel *Out of the Dust*. It still took a while for this genre to catch on. How exciting it was in 2014 when Jacqueline Woodson's middle-grade verse memoir *Brown Girl Dreaming* won the National Book Award for Young People's Literature, and soon after Kwame Alexander's middle-grade verse novel *The Crossover* won the Newbery.

Poetry is able to accomplish myriad things at once. Poems can tell stories, celebrate, entertain, make political statements, battle silence, find the universal in the personal. They attempt to express the otherwise inexpressible and help us remember what should not be forgotten. It is the poem that serves as the core of each verse novel, offering in and of itself opportunities for analytical and critical thinking, problem solving, and—what poems are truly for—expressing the otherwise inexpressible.

Because they can do all of these things, it just makes sense that one would use poems as building blocks to tell a novel-length story.

And backing up briefly to the Big Picture: in their work, poets are often attempting to write about feelings, memories, and intangible ideas; if they could say something any other way, they wouldn't have to write a poem about it. The same goes for verse novels: they were written in this form because it was the best way to tell their particular stories.

## POEMS VS. PROSE (JOURNAL ENTRIES)

One of the strengths of a novel in verse is that—just as in a singular poem—there is no extra “fat content” weighing down the story. The reader leaps from one poem to the next; the imagination fills in what might happen in between. In a traditional novel, the reader might have to follow a protagonist from his kitchen table to his coat rack, then to his foyer and troublesome door knob to the front stoop (where the morning's paper still lies), then down the walk to the driveway, where he stands searching his pockets for his car keys. In a verse novel, the protagonist moves from the kitchen table to the moving car within just a few short lines.

Each poem represents a scene and/or emotional state that moves the story forward. One poem might even function as an entire chapter.

Poetry also provides the tool of the line break, which is the only tool in the poet's tool box that the prose writer does not share. It is the “anti-prose” mechanism that doesn't allow the line to reach the edge of the page. Instead, again and again, the line break sends the reader back into the poem itself—layering meanings, creating tension and rhythm, and undercutting expectations. The poem offers a second form of music in addition to the music of the sentence: the music of the line.

The journal entries in *When You Never Said Goodbye* supplement the poems' storytelling. They allow Liz to chronicle important details such as Rhett's tour of Goddard Hall and the classes she's taking; and to present scenes and dialogue almost as a playwright would. The

journal entries also provide short pieces of exposition, some of it relayed by way of text messages. It can be fascinating to see the two genres—poetry and prose—standing next to each other, each helping the other tell Liz’s tale and setting up multiple examples of the adaptable powers of form and content. Note how the journal entry detailing how Liz is introduced to Insomnia Cookies (Journal Entry #2182, p. 86) leads to a short, humorous poem on the same subject (“Insomnia Cookies: An Advertisement Disguised as a Poem,” p. 87).

While prose gives Liz the chance to provide background information and relay certain stories in the gushing way a teenage girl might tell them to another teen, poetry—where every word, every syllable counts—enables her to cut straight to the emotion and heart of a story or scene. (See also “On Journaling,” page 9 below, for more on this subject.)

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING PROMPTS

The following questions may be used throughout the study of this novel as reflective writing prompts. Or, alternatively, they can be used as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.

- 1 The book opens with two people missing from Liz's life. Who are they and how does this set the stage for the rest of the novel? What "ghosts" (alive or dead) possibly linger during your own family gatherings?
- 2 Early in the novel (see "Doesn't It Figure," p. 10), Liz and her mom argue. What is her mom's point of view? What is Liz's point of view? Is this a topic they have wrangled over in the past? How do you know?
- 3 Why might Liz's mom feel sensitive or defensive when it comes to Liz's search? What might make Liz feel equally sensitive or defensive? How might Kate and Bob feel? Point to poems / lines that support your ideas.
- 4 Liz feels drawn to Washington Square Park soon after she arrives at NYU. Why do you think this is? Is there a special place you feel connected to in a similar way?
- 5 What role/s does Butter play, beyond being a source of comfort and company to Liz's mom?
- 6 The fact that Liz is adopted and actively searching for her birth mother isn't something she blurts out to everyone she meets. Why might Liz hesitate to share this information about herself? Why might she feel the need to control the telling of her own story?
- 7 Searching for one's birth mother is a journey filled with emotional turmoil and myriad roadblocks. What are some of the obstacles Liz encounters? What character traits enable her to persevere?
- 8 What roles do Cathy's postcards play in the story? (See pp. 20, 115, 186, 205).
- 9 Names play a significant role in this story. Why does Liz feel so connected to her own? In your opinion, do names have power? Explain.
- 10 Kate and Bob have different reactions to and concerns about their sister's search. Compare and contrast them, quoting from the text to support your ideas.
- 11 Liz's parents and siblings are not related to her by blood. What does "family" mean to you?

- 12 Although Liz and Tim agree before going off to college that they are free to date other people, a crucial and heart-rending moment for Liz happens when Tim tells her he is dating Zeena. From Tim's perspective, why is dating Zeena so important? Write a journal entry or a poem in which you share his thoughts. Be sure to include how he feels about forging ahead with Zeena while Liz is going through such a challenging time.
- 13 Liz has a network of family and friends who support her—each in her or his own way—throughout her search. Consider Liz's mother, Kate, Bob, Tim, Jan, Jade, Rhett, Henri, Sam, Calvin, and Ruth. Who do you believe supported her in the most significant way? Write a letter to that person explaining why she or he was so crucial to Liz during her search, especially that spring semester at NYU.
- 14 Research the origin and definition of the word "foundling." Why would Liz's adoption agency be called "The New York Foundling"?
- 15 In New York State, all adoption records remain closed unless the adoption was "open" from its inception. Some states have passed laws opening the records of closed adoptions. What are the laws in your state? What rationale is there for leaving records closed versus opening them? What possible consequences (positive and negative) are there for both birth mothers and adoptees whose records were originally closed?
- 16 How would your response to the novel be different if Liz had not found her birth mother? Explain.
- 17 What meanings can you attribute to the song "When You Never Said Goodbye"? How does it represent Liz's life? Is there a song that speaks to you in a meaningful way? Write/talk about the hows and whys.
- 18 Using the phrase, "This is a story about..." come up with five words that describe *When You Never Said Goodbye*. Explain your choices.

## PRE-WRITING ACTIVITY

Samuel Taylor Coleridge described poetry as “the best words in the best order.” Words are to poets what paint is to a painter—they’ve got to be exactly the right hue and texture. Poets can struggle for weeks, months, even years to find just the right word for a particular poem! They also strive to make language seem fresh, avoiding clichés and the “easy” words that might refer to the first, but not necessarily the best, thought that comes to mind when making a poem. Poets tend to avoid abstractions, too, choosing instead concrete words that draw on the five senses to convey feeling.

### Ask students:

What is the difference between abstract words and concrete words? (This might seem overly simple for a high-school or college classroom, but I’ve found that a refresher in this terminology helps set the stage for this activity.)

Ask students for a list of abstract words. Make sure this list includes words that tend to pop up often in young-people’s poems: beautiful/pretty; love/hate; ugly; gross/disgusting; good/bad. Write the words on a black/white/smart board, then ask the students what they mean by each, stressing the fact that these abstract words exist as ideas, but are meaningless unless they are explained or fleshed-out. In contrast, concrete words are ones that we can see, touch, taste, smell, or hear.

For each abstract word, ask the students to list at least three concrete words or phrases that might convey the *meaning* of the abstraction.

For example, if the abstract word is “love,” students might list “heart with an arrow through it,” “Romeo & Juliet,” “wedding ring,” “mother nursing her child,” or “a soldier risking his life to save a comrade.” Obviously, there are wide-ranging forms of love—all the more reason to be concrete!

Another example: if the abstract word is “beautiful,” then students might list “sunset,” “Miss America” (or a well-known beauty in the school or in contemporary society), “snow-covered mountains,” or “flowers.”

While drawing these concrete words out of your students, push them a little: What kind of flowers? (“Carnations.”) Are they growing out of the ground? (“No, they’re lined up on this flower rack at the bodega on Fifth Street.”) What color are they? (“Red and white, for Valentine’s Day.”) Ah, now we’re getting somewhere. “Beautiful as the red & white carnations on display at my neighborhood bodega” is so much more visual and interesting and gives a much better picture of “beautiful” than the abstract word!

Here is also an opportunity to engage students in use of the five senses. What did the air smell like at bodega? (“Those carnations and all the other flowers—like a perfume factory!”) Wow. What sounds did you hear? (“Car horns. Mr. Gonzaloz whistling behind the counter. The cash register making that ‘ding’ sound.”) Could you taste anything? (“Gum.”) What kind? (“Peppermint.”) What was the temperature that day? (“Cold.”) Cold as what? (“I forgot my coat . . . cold as a girl without a coat in February . . . in Brooklyn.”) Now she’s catching on!

A poet might not use *all* of these concrete words instead of the abstract “beautiful” or “cold,” but in striving for more specificity in this exercise, students get a sense of how much

more power there is in concrete words than in abstract ones. I wonder what color that girl's lips were on that February day?



## A STUDY OF THREE POEM TYPES, WITH WRITING EXERCISES

### THE EXTENDED METAPHOR

Poems such as “Tim” (p. 38), “The Hamster in My Family” (p. 40), “My First (and Last) Date with Sam Paris” (p. 206) and “Metaphor Poem for Last Workshop: ‘Studying for Final Exams’” (p. 225) are constructed from an extended metaphor. The subject of the poem is revealed in the title. By comparing the subject to something else entirely, the body of the poem expresses that idea/emotion/event in a concrete, relatable way. As Emily Dickinson said, “Tell all the truth, but tell it slant . . .”

Poems written in this form are able to speak about extremely difficult, personal experiences in a wide-reaching way. The subjects they address are hard to approach head-on. The extended metaphor provides a vehicle to write about “the difficult thing” without actually calling it by name. They are poems that express our feelings about a subject that is important to us—a life-changing experience, a horrific or awkward/embarassing experience, a funny sexual experience, or maybe some type of “awakening”—by comparing it to something else entirely. The actual “thing” is mentioned explicitly only in the title.

An extended metaphor poem presents the opportunity for a new perspective and a surprising kind of honesty. How else could Liz write about a “bad” date with Sam and yet keep him as a friend?

The main point of all creative writing, I think, is to make the reader feel something—move him or her to laugh, shudder, cringe, cry, shout. The job of the writer is not to tell about experience, but to *recreate* it so the reader feels the experience as if it’s happening to her/him along with a story or poem’s main character/speaker.

### Exercise:

Have the students read and discuss the poems listed above. Ask them: How does Liz feel about Tim? How would you characterize him? Does Liz think they have a future together? And about that hamster . . . how does each family member react to it? Who in the family is Liz most likely to turn to when she needs to discuss her search?

Ask students to point to specific words/phrases in the poems to support their answers. Note that all of these poems are written in free verse, though each features internal rhyme and lines of fairly equal length.

Let the students know that you’d like them each to write a poem. They should give their poems a fairly abstract title—emotions like “happiness” or “gross” work well—but the poem itself has to express that abstract concept by talking about something else entirely, saying “what it’s like.” It helps to choose a subject that feels important. They should think about some emotion or experience they have a difficult time explaining/sharing. (For example, “First Kiss” or “How I Felt When We Lost the Championship Game.”) Ask them to use at least three of the five senses in the poem, along with other strategies they may want to employ (rhythm, a certain line length, and so-on; imagery should come naturally with this exercise).

Read one more poem to them out loud, letting them know that, when you finish you’re going to be quiet, and they should begin. Give students 20+ minutes to draft something.

Then, tell the students that they will now read their poems, first pointing out that these are rough first drafts and so none of them will be “finished” and maybe none will be very good, but they’ll all have great potential if the students continue to work on them. Praise what’s strong in the poems, but do point out any abstractions or clichés and challenge them to come up with language that is instead fresh and surprising.

**Variation:**

In addition to writing a poem with an abstract title, I often give students the option of writing a poem titled “What It’s Like to Be Me” (which they can later title anything they want). Again, they have to express what it’s like to be in their own skin through metaphor and use of the senses. No abstractions or clichés allowed!

**THE SESTINA**

As I explain in “A Guide to the Poetics of *When You Never Said Goodbye*,” the sestina is made of six stanzas of six lines each, with a concluding tercet (three-line stanza). It is usually unrhymed, but the end words of the first stanza force a pattern onto the poem similar to a rhyme scheme, because they are all repeated in the succeeding stanzas in a strict order that varies with each stanza, and some repeat again in the tercet.

There are two sestinas in *When You Never Said Goodbye*: “Home on Break / Break for Home” (p. 156) and “April First” (p. 199).

The repeating end words in “Home on Break / Break for Home” are: (1) home, (2) river, (3) time, (4) follow, (5) until, and (6) see. The order in which these words are written set up the pattern for the rest of the poem. The whole thing has to go like this:

1,2,3,4,5,6	stanza one
6,1,5,2,4,3	stanza two
3,6,4,1,2,5	stanza three
5,3,2,6,1,4	stanza four
4,5,1,3,6,2	stanza five
2,4,6,5,3,1	stanza six
5,3,1	stanza seven

The tercet at the end not only goes 5, 3, 1, but these last three lines must *also* include end words 2, 4, 6, either at the start or in the middle of the lines. Liz breaks this last rule in “April First,” though the last tercet does end 5, 3, 1. [Ask students: what are the six end words used in this sestina?]

Sestinas present a terrific way to tell a story; the need to stick to those same six words creates lots of room for surprises (for the writer first, then the reader) along the way. For instance, I never would have come up with the image of that “river / of beds” in “Home for Break / Break for Home” if not for the stricture of the form.

**Exercise:**

Ask the students to read along as you or a fellow student reads aloud one of the sestinas mentioned above. What might make certain end words versatile in a sestina? (The possibilities include words that have multiple meanings/spellings; words that can act as both noun and verb or as past and present tense, such as “read”/“read” which also could be “red.”)

Challenge students to write a sestina. First, they should write the first six lines (stanza one)

and note the end words in each line. These are the end words that must repeat throughout the rest of the poem in the order explained above. Before writing anything more, they should write the repeating words down the right-hand side of their paper, stanza by stanza, in the prescribed order. This way, they know the words they are “writing toward” as they work on each line of the poem.

Students who draft a sestina must be congratulated! Ask students to read their poems aloud, and then talk about what was the most difficult part of this exercise, as well as what might have come easily. Were the end words they chose a help or a hindrance? Why? What might they do to improve the poem? What might they do differently if they were to write another sestina?

### **THE HAIKU**

“Haiku for Tim: Snowshoeing Catskill Mountain State Park” (p. 7), “Pigeons in Winter” (p. 46), “Bad Dream as Haiku” (p. 111), “St. Patrick’s Day Haiku” (p. 146), “Need I Say More?” (p. 224), “A Haiku: I Swear Before You and God Above”(p. 260).

As noted in this novel’s “Guide to the Poetics,” most people are familiar with haiku, a form that came to us from Japan. The traditional haiku is written in three lines with five syllables in the first line, seven syllables in the second, and five again in the third. Haiku are image-based poems. Some people say that they must present two images that conflict, while others say that the image *or* images presented must have emotional impact and/or offer some kind of insight. Many also say that the poem’s image should come from nature.

Liz has followed the syllabic requirements; most of them feature nature images.

What role do the haiku play in *When You Never Said Goodbye*? (Hint: their placement throughout the novel is vitally important.)

### **Exercise:**

Invite students to write four haiku poems, each set during a different season of the year.

## ON JOURNALING

A few thoughts on the contrast between prose and poetry are covered in the Introduction to this Teacher's Guide. It's clear that Liz fancies herself to be not only a poet but also a girl who keeps a journal because she hopes someday—in addition to being a poet—to be a novelist or memoirist (she talks about this in *The Girl in the Mirror*, in “Journal Entry 2115: The Truth Comes Out,” p. 110). Like writing poems, journaling enables Liz to describe events and try to make sense of them, disentangle thoughts and ideas, and release pent-up emotions.

But telling about events through journal entries is different from writing poems about them, as the goal of poems is to *recreate* the feeling of the actual experience as opposed to describing it. Liz's world is so emotion-packed during the time the novel is set, journaling actually gives her a little distance from what's happening, yet at the same time, provides a vehicle to help make sense of things. As teacher David Capella put it, the journal entries “balance [the] poems and . . . modulate the emotional tenor of Liz as a character within the novel's plot.”

Liz's journal entries often record something that happened; they are like short stories with beginnings, middles, and ends. Some of her journal entries are written in dialogues, like a play. Others are brief notes that allow her to jot down immediate thoughts, observations, feelings, and conversations—such as those following her first visit to The New York Foundling. Some of these particular entries go on to inspire poems, such as “Birth Name Villanelle” (p. 105) and “Old Habits Die Hard” (p. 106).

### **Writing Exercise:**

If your students are already keeping a journal, invite them to choose an entry or two and use it as a leaping-off point for a poem.

Students who are not already keeping journals can be invited to start one, even if it's only for a week. Ask them to jot down conversations they overhear, things they see on their way to school and home again, what the cafeteria smells and sounds like from day to day. Encourage students to employ all five senses in writing their observations and experiences. Each journal entry should be at least 250 words long. At the end of the week, challenge them to choose one journal entry to inspire a poem.

## THOUGHTS & SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE WORK OF REVISION

Early in the process of writing poems, students should be encouraged to find a secluded place to read their poems aloud to themselves. Often this is a great way to pick up on problems like awkward syntax, overused words, and missing phrases.

Next, students should simply read drafts of their poems out loud to the class. The students listening should be asked to pay very close attention while the poet is reading. After great applause, students should indicate what specific words or phrases they remember most from the poem they just heard. Do they remember the first line? What images stick in their minds? What is the last word in the poem? Most likely, the memorable parts of the poem will be the most concrete—the words or phrases that listeners could see, smell, touch, or taste in their imaginations. The poet should make note of what her fellow students found memorable, knowing these probably represent the strongest sections of the poem.

A more traditional way of workshopping and revising poems is helpful if students have had a chance to work on their poems beyond a first draft. In this case, divide the students into groups. It's best if photocopies can be made so that students have copies of each other's poems; if this is not possible, they will have to listen extra hard during this "workshop" exercise (not necessarily a bad thing!). If copies *are* available, have the students in the groups exchange poems with each other (so that, for example, each member of a group of six has five poems plus her/his own).

Decide which poem will be workshopped first, and then ask a student who is *not* the poet to read the poem aloud. The way a poem is written on the page—how punctuation, white space, line breaks, and stanza breaks are used—guide the reader in how the poem should sound, much like musical notation enables a musician to play a song he's never heard before. It's important for the poet to hear someone else "interpret" how the poem should be read, thus enabling her or him to find out if the "notation" is working.

Then, ask the writer to read the poem aloud. The members of the group should be listening for (a) language/images/phrases that leap out because they are memorable or especially strong for some stated reason; (b) language/images/phrases that seem tired, worn-out, over-used; (c) abstract words like "ugly," "pretty," and "happy."

Students who have been listening should next give feedback to the poet, starting with what they liked most about the piece. They must be specific. "I liked it" or "it's good" is not acceptable. Instead, they must point to words/phrases/lines/stanzas in the poem that seem strong, fresh, startling, or otherwise memorable and then say why this is so. Then the person providing the feedback should offer some kind of constructive criticism: "I got lost in the second stanza, where the speaker describes what might be a hedgehog," or "It seems that 'black as coal' is a phrase I've heard before. Maybe you could think of something else that seems fresher." Now is the time to for students to discuss why this and other phrases and abstract words might be strengthened (and how).

After all students have had a turn at both giving and receiving feedback, they should be given time (in class or at home) to revise their poems again. When revising their poems, students should try to link abstract words ("love," "happy," "success," "mad") with concrete ones ("chocolate ice cream," "summer vacation," "freshwater pearls," "a dentist's drill"), turning them into fresh metaphors that will make the poem stronger.

Poets often write many, many drafts before considering a particular piece to be finished. I have had the privilege to read some of Donald Hall's poems in draft form. I noticed that in the upper-right hand corner of these poems, there was a number (51,96, 127). Often the numbers were over 100. When I asked Don what these numbers indicated, he wrote back to say, "That's the number of drafts the poem has gone through." Writing good poems is hard, but joyful work.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS ABOUT POETRY

### FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

*How to Read a Poem and Fall in Love with Poetry* (Harcourt Brace, 1999) by Edward Hirsch.

*Poetry Handbook: A Dictionary of Terms* (HarperResource, 1982), by Babette Deutsch. There have been several editions of this book. It should be easy to find a used one online.

*Rhyme's Reason* (Yale University Press, 1989), by John Hollander. This is a fun little book that explains different forms by writing in them . . . an amazing feat in itself.

*To Read a Poem* (Heinle Publishers, 1992), by Donald Hall.

*The Conversation: Learning to Be a Poet* (Deerbrook Editions, 2015), by Dawn Potter.

*Sleeping on the Wing: An Anthology of Modern Poetry with Essays on Reading and Writing* (Vintage, 1982), by Kenneth Koch and Kate Farrell.

### FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS:

*Teaching the Art of Poetry: The Moves* (Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers, 2000), by David Cappella and Baron Wormser.

Also, there is a terrific *Conference on Poetry & Teaching* held at the Frost Place in Franconia, New Hampshire, every summer. Visit [www.frostplace.org](http://www.frostplace.org) for information.

The New England Young Writers Conference at Breadloaf is a four-day event for high school students who love to write. Visit <http://sites.middlebury.edu/neywc/>.

## **RECOMMENDED BOOKS ABOUT JOURNALING**

*Leaving a Trace: One How to Keep a Journal* (Back Bay Books, 2002), by Alexandra Johnson.

*The Creative Journal for Teens: Making Friends with Yourself* (Career Press, 2008), by Lucia Capacchione.



## RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND WEBSITES ABOUT ADOPTION

### BOOKS

*Adoption Nation: How the Adoption Revolution Is Transforming America* (Basic Books, 2001), by Adam Pertman.

*Being Adopted: The Lifelong Search for Self* (Anchor Books, 1993), by David M. Brodzinsky, PhD; Marshall D. Schechter, M.D.; and Robin Marantz Henig.

*Birthright: The Guide to Search and Reunion for Adoptees, Birthparents, and Adoptive Parents* (Penguin Books, 1994), by Jean A. S. Strauss.

*Ithaka: A Daughter's Memoir of Being Found* (Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1999), by Sarah Saffin.

*Journey of the Adopted Self* (Perseus Publishing, 1995), by Betty Jean Lifton.

*Second Choice: Growing Up Adopted* (Badger Hill Press, 1993), by Robert Andersen, M.D.

*Somebody's Child: Stories About Adoption* (TouchWood Editions, 2011), edited by Bruce Gillespie and Lynne Van Luven.

*Surrendered Child: A Birth Mother's Journey* (University of Georgia Press, 2004), by Karen Salyer McElmurray.

*The Adoption Reader: Birth Mothers, Adoptive Mothers and Adopted Daughters Tell Their Stories* (Avalon Publishing Group, 1995), edited by Susan Wadia-Ells.

*The Book of Sarahs* (Counterpoint Press, 2003), a memoir by Catherine McKinley.

*The Lost Children of Wilder: The Epic Struggle To Change Foster Care* (Vintage, 2002), by Nina Bernstein.

### LINKS ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

[adoptees.meetup.com](http://adoptees.meetup.com) (find a support group near you)

[adoptioninstitute.org](http://adoptioninstitute.org) (information about adoption and adoption reform)

[americanadoptioncongress.com](http://americanadoptioncongress.com) (information about adoption reform)

[tapestrybooks.com](http://tapestrybooks.com) (books and literature about adoption, including for teens)