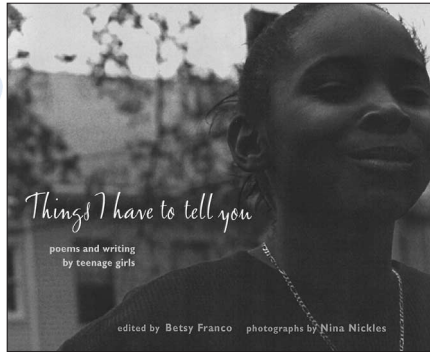


CHAT! JUST FOR TEENS

Things You'll Want to Hear

Things I Have to Tell You and *You Hear Me?* are powerful, uncensored, and sometimes raw collections of writing by teens. Betsy Franco, the editor, speaks to Candlewick about working with these young writers.



Things I Have to Tell You
 HC ISBN: 0-7636-0905-6
 \$15.99 (\$21.99 CAN)
 PB ISBN: 0-7636-1035-6
 \$8.99 (\$12.99 CAN)

A sneak peek at *Things I Have to Tell You*

Look out—I opened my mouth,
 and out came ideas
 you don't think are pretty.
 I suppose it would be scary
 to be a ventriloquist who
 found out
 her dummy can talk,
 to find the doll had a brain
 and opinions that will bite
 when provoked.
 I suppose it would be scary
 if I opened my coat
 and showed you all my
 secrets.

— from "New Honesty,"
 by Jessie Childress, age 16



Betsy Franco as a teen in Shaker Heights, Ohio

Candlewick: What inspired you to start these projects?

Betsy: I started collecting writing by teenage girls in response to a teenage friend of mine who was going through some difficult experiences in high school, and in response to the book *Reviving Ophelia* [about female adolescence].

Naturally, I was going to follow up with a collection written by teenage boys. There were so many stereotypes floating around about boys. Since my own sons didn't fit the stereotypes, I imagined that other boys didn't either.

Candlewick: What sort of surprises cropped up as you worked on the collections?

Betsy: I was most surprised by how honest the writing was. The writers' honesty and openness made me determined to try not to hit a false note in any aspect of the books.

Betsy: The editing was very light . . . line breaks or changing a word or a sentence here or there, to clarify what the authors were saying. In a few cases, I worked closely with writers to tighten their pieces by cutting them down.

Candlewick: You must have met with resistance, right?

Betsy: Some authors didn't like the editing changes, and we restored those pieces to their original form. The whole point of the book was to hear firsthand from teenagers. Hearing authentic voices was more important than impeccable technique.

Candlewick: Why do you think teens will want to read the works of other teen writers?

Betsy: Teens aren't afraid to be frank. These books are uncensored, so any reader can hear firsthand, honest accounts on subjects important to them.

Candlewick: *Things I Have to Tell You* will be published in May 2001, while *You Hear Me?* has been out for a few months and will also be in paperback in May. Now that they're published writers, what's life like for the teenage boys?

Betsy: The boys who have written to me and talked with me are very proud to be in the collection. One stayed in high school as a result of being published, and another gained a real sense of self-esteem. Another said, "If I don't know anything else about myself, I know that I can write."

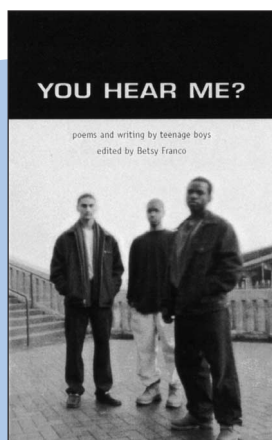
Betsy's next project (with Traci Gourdine and Annette Ochoa, a Yaqui who specializes in Indian education) is the poems, essays, and true stories of Native Americans, ages 12–22. If you're interested in submitting work for this collection, please contact Betsy for guidelines at: FrancoBe@aol.com, or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to P.O. Box 60487, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

A sneak peek at *You Hear Me?*

I need to do something,
 Write a letter,
 Let it go somehow.
 My heart attaches
 To things, people.
 When there is collision,
 I lose myself in it,
 In confusion.
 Why not have two
 hearts?
 I don't understand love,
 But I know it exists.

— Thomas Andrade, age 17

Candlewick: So, you didn't edit any of the submissions?



You Hear Me?
 HC ISBN: 0-7636-1158-1
 \$14.99 (\$20.99 CAN)
 PB ISBN: 0-7636-1159-X
 \$6.99 (\$9.99 CAN)

When she was younger . . .

Betsy loved the Beatles and reading
 by J. D. Salinger.