

Because the subjects of Jim Goldberg's book, *Raised by Wolves*, are young people, I asked four of the students with whom I was working in writing residencies this year to spend time with the book and to write their impressions of Jim Goldberg's portrayal of young people. Of the four teenagers, three have lived on the streets, one is an eighteen year old urban teenage mother; one is a fifteen year old suburban pregnant teenager; one is twenty years old and has been on his own for years; one is a suburban sixteen year old. I chose not to use any names because in the case of two of the students, they are classified Special Education and, therefore their names cannot be used.

Dale Davis

RAISED BY WOLVES

To me, *Raised by Wolves* is the story of

The rich get rich and the poor get poorer.

In the front of the book, Jim Goldberg lists his cast of characters: Teenagers are not characters. We are real life human beings. We have compassion. We suffer.

Looking at the photographs brings tears to my eyes.

People should understand that being a teenager today is so hard. What are the teenagers Goldberg photographed supposed to be doing? Me, I don't see anyone helping out teenagers in America. I think we need to start worrying about our youth. Kids need help. Kids do not enjoy living on the street. Kids live on the street because there is no way out. There is no way out. Will Goldberg's book help put any kids in rehab for free, help any kids get a job or get cleaned up? Will Goldberg's book help any kid get a place to live? Where does Goldberg live?

What makes the people who go to art galleries look at photographs of teenagers who live on the street, teenagers who shoot up heroin and smoke crack? Why do people who go to art galleries look at photographs of kids who have nothing? What are they looking for?

If people think this is art, well it is not.

What gives this man the right to take a picture of homeless kids who live on a fire escape?

If people are so concerned about our youth, why don't they do something?

There is a photograph of this kid smoking crack.

He has nothing else to do. The kids in the book have nothing. They have no TV., no radio, no heat, no food, no warm bed, so they turn to drugs. Drugs are where they think they will get love.

If Jim Goldberg cares at all, is the money he is making from the books going to help kids on the streets who need it?

Does Goldberg have any feelings at all? The kids he photographed live in sewers. They have nothing, and he wants to take that away.

I look at Jim Goldberg's *Raised by Wolves*. I don't understand what would make someone take pictures of teenagers who have nothing, teenagers who have been through hard times. Jim Goldberg has everything, a house, a wife, a daughter, etc. Where is the picture of his house, his wife, his daughter, etc.? At the end of the book he writes, "Finally to Susan Miller, my wise ol' back bone an' eyes, and my daughter Ruby Sophia, it is our love and your inspiration that nourished me and got me through it all. Thank you." Thank you, that's it. Your book was made possible by kids' lives.

I think Jim Goldberg sees kids the way government does. I think *Raised by Wolves* is a metaphor for the way society sees kids. Goldberg puts kids out there like they are all one story and every story is the same. Homelessness is not art. Homelessness is a problem of society. Almost one quarter of the homeless people in the United States today are children, and this is a problem that we need to face and try to do something about while Jim Goldberg gets richer from *Raised by Wolves*.

I am twenty years old, and I have spent some time with Jim Goldberg's book *Raised By Wolves*. First, let me tell you a little bit about myself. I was raised by my mom and sometimes my dad. My dad is an alcoholic, and my mom cared more about whatever job she had than her own kids. I acted up in school because it was the only way to get attention from my mother. When I was twelve, I was molested by a friend of my dad's. I had to go through court by myself. My father went on his merry way and moved while I was going through court. The only thing done to my father's friend was he got one year in jail and he got out in six months. These memories are stuck in my head forever. All he had to do was six months in jail.

I have lived on the streets; it is no fun. Living on the streets is disgusting. It's hard to keep yourself clean, to keep your clothes clean. It's hard to get through each day. You don't know where you're going to sleep next. You don't know when you're going to sleep next. You don't know how long you're going to sleep next or whether you're going to wake up in the morning. You don't know where, when, and how you will be able to get food to eat. Living alone on the streets is scary. You don't know what kind of people you will run into, and there is no place to go for protection. It's the way people look at you when you live on the streets, some people look at you like you are a loser of society, and that you put yourself in the homeless situation. Some people, if you can get them to talk to you, will listen. I tried to trust everyone I possibly could because that was the only way I knew I could make it and could possibly get some recommendations on how to get off the streets. Somebody is anybody and I hoped that anybody could possibly be that somebody who could possibly make a change in my situation. Sometimes the anybodies I talked to became nobodies.

Raised by Wolves is what? It's Jim Goldberg's book. It is how Jim Goldberg saw what he saw. Come on Jim Goldberg do you think that homeless young people doing drugs is career glamorous? Homeless young people doing drugs is not glamorous. I know.

I want to start out by saying I am eighteen years old. I have a question for Jim Goldberg, how much money from the profits of *Raised by Wolves* did you share with the kids whom you photographed? I have other questions, too. Did you show or tell any of the kids you photographed they did not have to live like this, they did not have to take drugs? Did you show or tell the kids how they might live like you? Were you a badly needed example for the kids you photographed or was your career as photographer leading you? Another question I have is who supported you photographing for this book and what was it they thought they were supporting? I think the only reason you photographed and made this book was because the kids did not know how to tell you no. I question whether the kids had the smarts to know what you were doing.

I grew up living on the streets. I know what it is like to go without food or clothes. My mother was on crack cocaine and my father did every drug on the face of the earth. I was abused by my father mentally and then at the age of ten physically. I have been on my own since the age of sixteen, living from house to house. Even though I didn't have a place to stay I never gave up the thought of finishing school.

At eighteen I became pregnant. I gave birth to a healthy baby in December. Since the day he was born I have struggled with depression. I have been taking care of a new born son and getting ready to graduate from high school. I knew it would be hard but not this hard.

I am in my own apartment. I have had a little help from teachers and counselors, but at home I'm alone. I'm alone, all alone, and I have to deal with this. Recently my brother was suspended from school again for the seventh time. I made the decision to let him stay with me. I did this so I can try to lead him in the right direction. I am all he has left.

I still wonder Jim Goldberg what was your moral obligation to the kids who allowed into their lives to photograph them?

I am a sixteen-year-old suburbanite. For me reading *Raised by Wolves* was like swimming in a pool of unknown waters. I didn't know what to expect, and I was surprised at what I found: anger, loneliness, drug abuse, addiction. The book is extremely straightforward. It uses pictures and powerful words. At first glance, Jim Goldberg gives the appearance of a hero. He is doing what seems the impossible, capturing humanity's worst realizations and biggest nightmares. For a second it seemed as though somebody gave a damn, someone wanted to make a difference.

When people associate with one another for an extended period of time a bond is formed. Some call it companionship, some friendship. Whatever the word, it was obvious a bond had been created between Jim Goldberg and his "characters." However after finishing *Raised by Wolves* Jim Goldberg is able to detach himself, to scrub himself clean. When Jim Goldberg acquired what he needed, he left. Goldberg's needs and his subjects' needs were not the same.

Goldberg was a photographer looking for a story. He found one. He found it in the streets. I am left wondering about this hit and run pictorial account. The success of Goldberg's work is judged by the viewer. The book costs \$50.00. Who, then, are the viewers? I am left questioning Goldberg's purpose.

