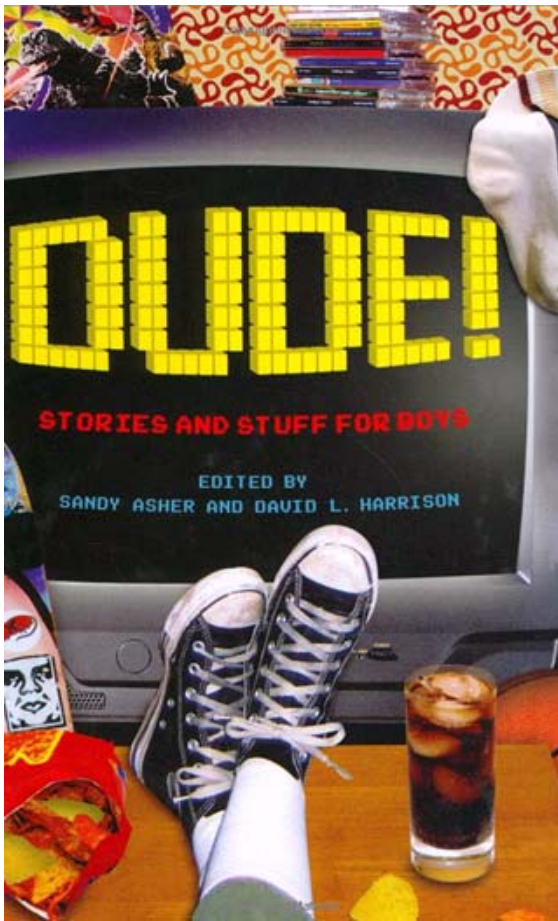


DUDE!



- **Reading level:** Ages 9-12
- **Hardcover:** 272 pages
- **Publisher:** Dutton Juvenile
- **August 3, 2006**
- **Language:** English
- **ISBN-10:** 0525476849

**DUDE! Stories and Stuff For Boys**

### **Children's Literature**

Middle grade boys should find this collection both amusing and comforting. A conversational preface introduces us to eighteen original works, including fiction, poetry, drama, and essays. They are book ended by Sneed B. Collard III's first person story in which the hero faces life and terror on a thirty-five foot diving platform, and Barry Kornhauser's memoir piece, "The Ten-Ton Accordion." In between lies wide terrain. John Urquhart's Civil War one-act play, *The Enemy*, follows a twelve-year old recruit in the Confederate Army from bravado to understanding. Jane Yolen's brief poem, "Going for Gold," uncovers the emotional space of a daydream that ends with a self-deprecatingly humorous twist. Some of the protagonists roam the complex labyrinths of family relationships, as in Barbara Robinson's "A Pet for Calvin," and Bill C. Davis's moving "Family Meeting." Others teeter on the brink of knowingness, like Ron Koertge's "Lanky Boys With Cars." Particularly memorable is Jose Cruz Gonzalez's delightful "Watermelon Kisses," a dialogue riff between two brothers with powerfully mythic names. Back matter contains biographical information on the contributors, as well as a brief commentary on the origins of each piece. A textured exploration of the recursive concerns of an all too transient phase of boyhood, this title is a nice addition to the growing body of middle grade multi-author anthologies.

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## **School Library Journal**

Gr 4-7-These selections, newly written for this collection, include stories, plays, essays, and verse, and, for the most part, they are as wholesome and innocent as Boy's Life. In one exception, Bill C. Davis's "Family Meeting," the narrator has to deal with the suicide of his older half brother and acknowledge that his father did not marry any of his three wives until they were pregnant. In Ron Koertge's realistic play Lanky Boys with Cars, two 12-year-olds discuss what they know, or think they know, about sex. But the norm here is uncontroversial. Sneed B. Collard III's narrator in "The Tower" faces his fear of jumping from a high platform into a river. In "To Speak or Not to Speak," Edwin Endlich's protagonist discovers that, when acting out memorized lines, he does not stutter. Barbara Robinson's allergic hero of "A Pet for Calvin" adopts a worm. "The Squids" and "Heroes and Villains" have science-fiction motifs, and "The Marooned Boy" is a version of a Caddo Indian story. Perhaps the most touching piece is Raymond Bial's essay, "Bucking Bales," about a summer he spent doing chores for a neighboring farmer and learning in the process that, unlike his father, a man could praise and appreciate what a boy does. The appendix contains information about the writers and short essays by them about how the pieces came to be written. Dude! will find its niche in libraries where more anthologies are needed, where librarians and teachers want ready access to read-alouds more mature than picture books, and where one-act plays are popular.-Coop Renner, Hillside Elementary, El Paso, TX Copyright 2006 Reed Business Information.