

Arlene Violet

Reviews



War Record: Dreams of a Stolen World

First time author, Mark Zaccaria, has a deft eye and ear for the sights and sounds of the 1930's and 40's in his book, WAR RECORD. As surely as his narrative makes one experience the description of simmering "gravy" in the Italian neighborhood of East Boston, the reader is marinated in the everyday life of its residents. While technically a work of fiction, Mr., Zaccaria's obvious protagonist is his father, Leo, and the real life incidences in the book give WAR RECORD the ring of truth. Whether its young boys observing the etiquette of marbles and asserting their superiority by excellence in the game's maneuvers, or learning vital lessons at the school and library, or vying for the ladies' attention as the "Easties" model their behaviors after such matinee idols as Clark Gable or James Cagney, the attention to detail allows anyone who didn't live in that era to experience the life on the streets.

WAR RECORD excels in its story-telling when it focuses on Leo's encampment as a POW in Berga, Germany. His schemes to keep himself alive and possibly escape are devoid of any sentimentality as Leo relies on sheer willpower and cunning to overcome the hardships of his captivity. Perhaps his earlier prowess at marbles foreshadows his skill to stay one step ahead of his captors.

The book is somewhat unclear on how Leo actually gets captured and sometimes the point of view switches from second to third person making the narrative sometimes difficult to follow, yet the book holds the attention of the reader. Mr. Zaccaria has added to the understanding of the era in this tribute to his father.

Former Attorney General Arlene Violet is the author of CONVICTIONS (Random House) and THE MOB AND ME (Simon and Schuster)