

The dog and his relationship with man has always been something marvelous and beautiful that touches me deeply. I wanted to write a novel about a dog, but I also meant for it to be about America, with its relevant times, places and people. My idea – the dog was to be a window through to the soul of this nation as we follow him on a journey from person to person.

Most of the characters in this work were quilted out of my own personal journey across these United States. I made that trip a study for the book I wanted to write. I talked with people in coffee shops and bars, struck up conversations at truck stops and RV parks. I went to church charities for animal shelters and biker rallies for rescue missions and gatherings in city parks for the “Blessing of the Animals.”

I collected this living documentary of true stories and personal insights about man and the dog that were as rich and moving as poetry and paintings and felt like music and that spoke to the unfathomable ways of existence. Somewhere long into my journey I began to realize I was missing a centerpiece character, who along with the dog could anchor this mural of American life I was trying to create. Then one night, life intervened.

I was on a California back road heading toward the desert. There were storms that night and the wipers had to fight away the rain. The road was black and where it swept through a low ascension of hills towards the AT and SF railroad tracks I came upon the scene of an accident.

A pickup had hit a dog. Its headlights fleshed out a young man kneeling over the wounded animal. As I ran toward the scene the young man looked up and asked if I could help get the dog into his truck, and he would take him to an animal hospital in town.

As we set the dog on the front seat I noticed a U.S. Marine tattoo on the young man’s shoulder. And from that decal on down to his wrist was a hatchety scar that spoke to me of a battle wound.

Pointing at it I asked, “Iraq?”

His face told of having experienced much. “Iraq,” he said.

Whether it was an accidental happenstance or the poetry of fate, those few fleeting minutes would prove to be at the soul of everything I wanted to say, from the intimate to the ultimate. And so, on a back road in the rain, I found the character I was searching for to be an anchor, along with the dog, for this mural of American life.

★★★★★ **Hope For a Hurting World**, July 30, 2009

By [Kevin L. Nenster "omnivore"](#) (Kearney, Nebraska) - [See all my reviews](#)

TOP 1000 REVIEWER   

Giv is a stray mutt, a dedicated survivor, the loyal witness to a string of episodes in recent American history. Stolen from his home as a puppy, he sees the highs and lows of Dallas' Deep Ellum, survives Hurricane Katrina with a cat on his back, escapes an animal testing lab, and saves a young boy from a raging wildfire. He's as indomitable as Benji, but grittier.

This book is essentially a road movie told from a dog's point of view. Giv moves from the heart of one survivor to another, steadily opening up hearts that had turned closed and bringing hope in his wake. People who had given up, who had run away, who wanted to die, all find hope in Giv's gentle loyalty.

Boston Teran depicts America sunk in dark malaise, a country adrift and wondering what it stands for anymore. But the love of a dog teaches people how to love once more, how to trust, and how to live like there's something worth dying for. People discover how to give because Giv teaches them that they have something others need.

Alternately angry and touching, this book is what America needs at a time like ours. In an era that has taught us to be hard-hearted and selfish, Giv reminds us that we are the hope for others in this world. And if we can find our way back to the home where we belong, maybe there's still hope for us and the rest of our hurting world as well.

A while back, I was contacted by Jim at [Kelley and Hall](#) about reviewing a book by Boston Teran called [The Creed of Violence](#). It looked really interesting so I said, sure! A short while after they sent me that book, they sent me another one of his books, [Giv: The Story of a Dog and America](#). I wasn't under any pressure to read or review it, but I thought it would be a great addition to my [Dog Days of November](#) reads. So I grabbed it off my shelf.

And O. MY. GOSH. I loved it. I'm not sure if I loved it because I had no expectations or what, but what a beautiful book. Beware: If you are the type that might tear up while reading a book, this is one of those books. The idea behind the story is based on events in the author's life. You can read his idea for the [book here](#).

The story follows the life of a dog named Giv. The book is composed as the story of Giv's life written by one of Giv's many owners, Sergeant Dean Hickok. From Giv's birth, by chance, fate, or luck, he gets passed on from person to person, from experience to experience. The blurb from the press release by Americans Speak says "The Forrest Gump of dog books." I'm not sure about all that, but boy does Giv go through some stuff. He's in Dallas with some struggling musicians checking out the book depository, he's there through Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, and he's there for an Iraqi war veteran.

While the book is about a dog named Giv, it's also about the people he meets. Memorable characters. Heart-wrenching characters. It's about the free-will, undying spirit of man and man's best friend. I loved how the idea of the act of rebellion, not always a bad thing, was a pivotal aspect of the book and the character of Giv. Boston Teran wrote rebellion as "the power to choose freely who one will or will not be". I like that. As he points out, America was founded by rebels and there's a little bit of rebel in us all.

I find it hard to write about this book and not sound cheesy or blubbery...but I can't help it. I really loved it. I was really surprised how much I liked it. It's not a book I would have picked up on my own but I am so glad I was sent it.

As a side note: who is [Boston Teran](#)? Apparently no one knows! The About the Author section states that it's either a pseudonym of a well-known writer, or a group of writers, or who knows! Apparently *Creed of Violence* has been bought by Universal for the second-highest price ever paid for a manuscript and another novel, *God is a Bullet* is highly acclaimed and is being adapted to film as well. Interesting, right?

Has anyone else read this or have it to read? I'd love to hear another person's opinion. Or have you read any other Boston Teran novels? Thoughts on just who Boston Teran is?

I'd love to give away a copy but I'm going to make my husband read it. That and I want to keep mine. So go buy it, borrow it...just read it.