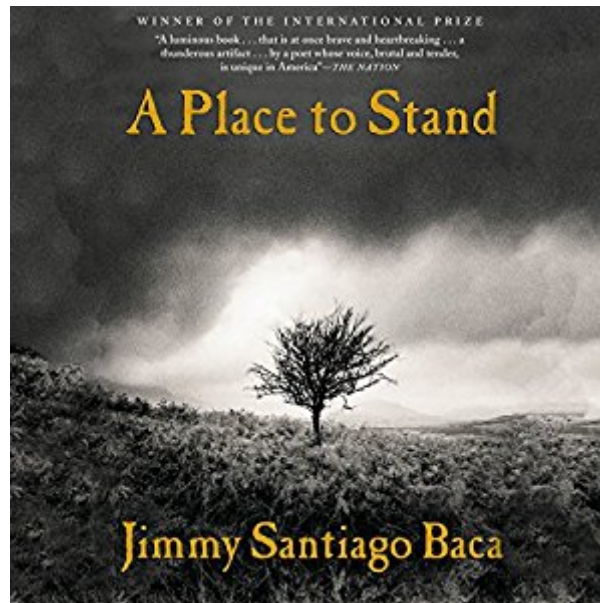


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A Place To Stand: The Making Of A Poet



Synopsis

Jimmy Santiago Baca has been called an heir to Pablo Neruda and one of the best poets in America today. At the age of 21, however, he was illiterate and facing five to 10 years in a maximum-security penitentiary for selling drugs. Five years later, he emerged from prison with the ability to read and a passion for writing poetry. *A Place to Stand* is his memoir of childhood on the small farms of New Mexico, his adolescence spent in orphanages and detention centers, his years as a drug dealer in San Diego and Arizona, and his extraordinary personal transformation under the harrowing conditions behind bars. Life in prison was often brutal, and Baca describes the extreme measures he had to take to survive, from beating another inmate with a lead pipe to slicing an attacker's stomach with a butcher's knife. Although these were acts of self-defense, they landed him repeatedly in solitary confinement. His time in isolation was intended to break his spirit, but it proved to be the catalyst for an extraordinary series of memories and revelations that endowed him with an indomitable will to resist the dehumanization of prison life. Poetry became an essential element of this newfound sense of self, and the act of writing offered a powerful means of transcending his surroundings. *A Place to Stand* is a vivid portrait of life inside a maximum-security prison and an affirmation of one man's spirit in overcoming the most brutal adversity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I liked everything about this book. The poems, the truths and the sacred Darkness brought to light -thru no fault of his own (in spite of himself and his life's path)- AND because (of himself and his

soul-listening) he woke to actualize his own soul. George Gurdjieff states that Man has a soul, but is sleeping about it. That it takes real awakening, conscious effort, to realize our soul... we need to actualize it. Otherwise, we are just taking it for granted that it is alive, and functioning in this world - and in fact, that is just a hope, a dream. Until we go consciously within - however that path might be - and be response-able to wake ourselves from the nightmare/dreaming we sleep-walk around in, we are soul-less. When we breakthrough this thick layer of shadow, consciously, as seekers, as listeners to the compelling, as stewards of the Mystery calling, then we wake. And soul is actualized. I luv that Mr. Baca experiences this. I say experiences, because once you do, it is never just some event in the past... but is that and always a present knowing. A presence of Self. I would love to exchange poems with him. I have put this book as required reading on my syllabus... As an artist and a depth psychologist, meditation therapist and educator, I sense that Mr. Santiago Baca and I know each other in that reality of a miraculous light we owe our lives to. Though we have gotten here by utterly opposite paths. Which points out that the Soul Does Not Separate us... though the world might. Thank you for this gift of your story and your SoulSong Mr. Baca... Satya Keyes

I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Baca on a recent US flight. I read his book and was very touched with his honesty and story telling ability. Such a difficult beginning for him and yet he has persevered, managed to beat the odds and is a delight to visit with. I feel very honored to have been able to spend time with him and to learn more about his life's journey.

I had to read this book for my writing class. At first when I read what it was about I thought I was going to be bored. Then I read it...and it is a great book. I was able to write the paper that I needed to with no problems. Jimmy had endured a lot and it is amazing to hear his story and how he changed his life.

A true story of struggle, hardship, and survival. This book is a must read for anyone to understand what it is like to be Chicano, poor, and oppressed. Poverty affects everyone but when you are a minority, the battle is more intense. We have many Black people survive oppression and slavery but the public is unaware of the struggle of the Chicano people and how their land was taken away from them. "A Place to Stand," is just one story of just one Chicano that experienced life in prison and the very sad ending of losing his family forever. Jimmy Santiago Baca describes his life living in an orphanage and how ending up in prison affected his life. This book is a must read for anyone who is interested in biographies.

I loved this hopeful and at times tragic story of a young man who although suffered so much loss and experienced so much injustice and abuse at such a young age manages to teach himself to read and write while in prison. Loved his poetry. Baca reminds us that as humans we are resilient and can do much with words. Strongly recommend this book

A wonderfully authentic and poignant voice sharing an intensely personal yet American story.

This is one of the most remarkable narratives from someone who has endured what we in society do to people. Your achievement does not only lie in survival, but in your spontaneous way of using every form of damage to grow. This book is inspirational to human beings.

I had to read this for a class, but as it turns out, I really enjoyed it. It opened my eyes to the world of Arizona's Florence prison, as well as the lifestyle associated with people on both sides of the barbed wire fence.

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