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# Healing Home: Health and Homelessness in the Narratives of Young Women

Vanessa Oliver

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**Vanessa Oliver : Healing Home: Health and Homelessness in the Narratives of Young Women** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Healing Home: Health and Homelessness in the Narratives of Young Women:

Based on research that was awarded the Governor General's Academic Gold Medal, *Healing Home* is an exploration of the lives and health of young women experiencing homelessness. Vanessa Oliver employs an innovative methodology that blends sociology and storytelling practices to investigate these women's access to health services, their understandings of health and health care delivery, and their health-seeking behaviours. Through their life stories, Oliver demonstrates how personal and social experiences shape health outcomes. In contrast to many previous studies that have focused on the deficits of these young people, *Healing Home* is both youth-centric and youth-positive in its approach: by foregrounding the narratives of the women themselves, Oliver empowers a sub-section of the population that traditionally has not had a voice in determining policies that shape their realities. Applying a strong, articulate, and systemic analysis to on-the-ground narratives, Oliver is able to offer fresh, incisive recommendations for health and social service providers with the potential to effect real-world change for this marginalized population.

*Healing Home* is a book of high quality on all dimensions theoretical, methodological, substantive, and technical. Vanessa Oliver's focus on homeless young women in Canada, as well as her provision of space for them to tell their stories, is unique: despite the ever-proliferating literatures on homelessness, even feminist researchers have paid very little attention to youth who are inadequately housed or not housed at all, and considerably less attention has been devoted to female than to male youth in that situation. Oliver is to be commended for conducting this much-needed, groundbreaking exploratory study that will provide a solid foundation for future research on homeless young women. She makes a compelling case for the urgent need for decision-makers at all levels to elicit the perceptions, experiences, and recommendations of those who will be targeted by their legislation and policies. (Dorothy Chunn, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Simon Fraser University) About the Author Vanessa Oliver is an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology at Mount Allison University.