



# All the Broken Pieces

By Ann E. Burg

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An award-winning debut novel from a stellar new voice in middle grade fiction.

Matt Pin would like to forget: war torn Vietnam, bombs that fell like dead crows, and the terrible secret he left behind. But now that he is living with a caring adoptive family in the United States, he finds himself forced to confront his past. And that means choosing between silence and candor, blame and forgiveness, fear and freedom.

By turns harrowing, dreamlike, sad, and triumphant, this searing debut novel, written in lucid verse, reveals an unforgettable perspective on the lasting impact of war and the healing power of love.

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## All the Broken Pieces By Ann E. Burg Bibliography

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- 240 pages

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## Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 6–8—In 1977, 12-year-old Matt Pin lives a fractured life. He is the son of a Vietnamese woman and an American soldier and was airlifted to safety from the war zone. Adopted by a caring American couple, he has vivid and horrific memories of the war and worries about the fates of his mother and badly injured little brother. Matt's adoptive family adores him, and he is the star pitcher for his middle school baseball team, but there are those who see his face and blame him for the deaths of the young men they lost in the war. The fractured theme runs the course of this short novel in verse: Matt's family, the bodies and hearts of the Vietnam vets, the country that is "only a pocketful of broken pieces" that Matt carries inside him. Ultimately, everything broken is revealed as nonetheless valuable. While most of the selections read less like poems and more like simple prose, the story is a lovely, moving one. Use this in a history class or paired with Katherine Applegate's *Home of the Brave* (Feiwel & Friends, 2007).—*Heather M. Campbell, formerly at Philip S. Miller Library, Castle Rock, CO*

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From [Booklist](#)

\*Starred Review\* Airlifted from Vietnam at the end of the war and adopted by a loving American family, Matt Pin, 12, is haunted by what he left behind, even as he bonds with his new little brother and becomes a star pitcher on the school baseball team. In rapid, simple free verse, the first-person narrative gradually reveals his secrets: his memories of mines, flames, screams, helicopters, bombs, and guns, as well as what the war did to his little brother ("He followed me / everywhere, / he follows me still"). But this stirring debut novel is about much more than therapy and survivor guilt. When his parents take Matt to a veterans' meeting, he hears the soldiers' stories of injury and rejection and begins to understand why the school bully calls him "frogface" ("My brother died / Because of you"). There is occasional contrivance as Matt eavesdrops on adults. But the haunting metaphors are never forced, and the intensity of the simple words, on the baseball field and in the war zone, will make readers want to rush to the end and then return to the beginning again to make connections between past and present, friends and enemies. Add this to the Booklist read-alike column "Children at War." Grades 6-10. --Hazel Rochman

## Review

Jefferson Cup Award Winner

Booklist Editors' Choice

ALA Best Book for Young Adults

IRA Notable Book for a Global Society

"...[a] stirring debut novel...will make readers want to rush to the end and then return to the beginning again to make connections between past, present, friends and enemies."--Booklist, starred review

"The verse form carries highly charged emotions and heavy content with elegiac simplicity."--Kirkus, starred review

"Using spare free verse, first-time novelist Burg beautifully evokes the emotions of a Vietnamese adoptee as he struggles to come to terms with his past."--Publishers Weekly, starred review

"...the story is a lovely, moving one."--School Library Journal

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Dawne Feliciano:**

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#### **Ronald Meyers:**

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