

**Reviews of *Miss Crandall's School for Young Ladies and Little Misses of Color***

**From SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL - 9/01/07**

"Twenty-four sonnets tell the story of Prudence Crandall and her efforts to educate young African-American women in Canterbury, CT, 1833-1834. The school began as a boarding school for white girls; when two black women inquired about taking classes and Crandall agreed, the townspeople withdrew their daughters. As she accepted more black students, the town became more vocal in its resistance, poisoning the school water supply, refusing to sell it supplies, and charging Miss Crandall and others with a variety of crimes. The sonnet format is challenging but compelling. . . .a heartfelt, unusual presentation."

**From KIRKUS REVIEWS - 8/15/07 - STARRED REVIEW**

"[A] glorious poetic celebration of the teacher and students at a Connecticut school that defied mid-19th-century convention to educate African-American girls. Divided into six sections, four sonnets in each, the voices of the 24 girls tell, one by one, the tale, from hope and excitement at the beginning of the enterprise to fear and defiance as forces both institutional and vigilante conspire to destroy Miss Crandall's School. . . . A foreword provides a brief prose history of the school; a concluding authors' note explains their collaborative process. (Poetry. 10+)"

**From HORN BOOK - 9/01/07**

"Taking on the voices of individual students, Alexander and Nelson create a portrait of a determined community of learners, the poems escalating in drama as the young women face racial hatred, from poisoned well water to their own Kristallnacht of broken glass and fire. Both poets play with the form, allowing readers to see the elasticity inherent in the exacting fourteen-line sonnet. However, what is always trenchantly clear is the power and worth of education, as when in "Fire from the Gods" Nelson acknowledges that "the Ancestors [are] tickled to death to see / a child they lived toward find her mind's infinity." "

**From BOOKLIST - 10/01/07 - STARRED REVIEW**

Twenty-four clear, beautiful poems in different voices. . . . Alexander and Nelson, both Connecticut poets, use dramatic sonnets to tell how Crandall and her students braved

resistance to teach and learn. The pupils speak directly of the anguish of family parting (illiteracy means silence when you leave home); the wonder of learning (I didn't know how much I didn't know); the racism, including the etymology of invective (no one in town will sell us anything); and the horrifying climax of Arson at Midnight, when 300 men attacked the school and closed it down.”