

Guess who got reviewed by the New York Times? These Detroit elementary students did

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Darn it! The New York Times [beat me to this story](#), or, rather, to this book review, but I'm going to go ahead and write it anyway. Because the book *Where Is It Coming From?* is hilarious.

I've thumbed through the book a few times now and each time there's something that makes me laugh out loud. We're talking snort-worthy stuff here – whether it's a short short about aliens that fart lava rocks, or an adventure tale about a fireman who eats fire and has a pet goose and a bulldog, or a riddle about a creature that has three parts, no legs, and "can survive for three months. Then, I disappear." (Spoiler: It's a snowman!)

The stories are illustrated by author Dave Eggers, and written by elementary students from the [James and Grace Lee Boggs School](#) in Detroit. We've featured the Boggs School students a number of times here on State of Opportunity; if you haven't heard Zak Rosen's [beautifully produced series on the school](#), check it out.

The students' stories in *Where Is It Coming From?* are quirky, fun, and full of imagination. And, as the New York Times reviewer points out, the stories can be, well, frank.

Many of the stories display the wonderfully frank approach to physical life so often squashed by squeamish adult censorship. "Trip to Atlanta," by Riley Jackson, tells about a long drive down South, culminating in the declaration, once she was there with her relatives, that the author "was feeling so proud that my dad drove all the way from Detroit to Atlanta without going to the bathroom." On the next page, she even reiterates her feeling: "That is why I am proud." And in "When I Went to the Zoo," by Yusef Muhammad, the author uses his powers of observation to note, about the zebras: "They were all grown-ups. They smelled weird."

As he writes in the intro to the book, Dave Eggers visited the Boggs School last spring. He spent some time with the students in the Boggs School Writing Club, an after-school program run by volunteers from the community and [826michigan](#), a non-profit writing and tutoring center in southeast Michigan. The students read their stories out loud to him, and he felt the stories were "so ingenious, compelling, and funny, that I thought they deserved a wider audience."

Well, the book made it into the New York Times – and the State of Opportunity blog! – so, mission accomplished.

