

NOBODY'S BOY by Dianne Bates (Celapene Press)

RRP:\$12.95

ISBN: 978-89872556-0-0

Reviewed by Goldie Alexander.

Ron Green's family is broken, just like him. His mother is in jail, Dad's second wife Anna doesn't want him, Aunt Maree actively dislikes him, and his most recent foster parents are on holiday. In this chaotic environment, Ron tries to make sense of his life. Some of this verse novel includes a graphic description of Ron's earliest years:

*our home was plastic bags
that held our stuff
we slept where we landed
at the end of each day
sometimes a motel
roaches in my bed
friends' places
hotels
often in cars and trucks
where the first lesson I learnt
was click the locks
so no-one
can break in*

When Rosie and Bob offer to foster Ron, he jumps at the chance. Theirs is the home and the parents he's always dreamt about. But as it's still not what he really wants, he acts against his own best interests. Yet Ron is hopeful and resilient, able to make friends, value positive relationships, and he knows exactly what he needs. Narrated in Ron's own voice, the writing is achingly poignant.

*Nina
her skin is like dark honey
she has hair in a hundred braids
with beads at the ends
and her eyes are green
made big by glasses*

Bates, the author of some 90 books, and a foster parent herself, has a supreme understanding of Ron's predicament. My only criticism is that only very occasionally, the adult voice seems to seep through. I recommend this as an excellent book for schools as it deals with important contemporary issues.

Goldie Alexander writes fiction and non-fiction for adults, and children of all ages. She is best known for "My Australian Story: Surviving Sydney Cove." Her latest historical fiction for Young Adults is 'The Youngest Cameleer.' about the non indigenous finding of Uluru.