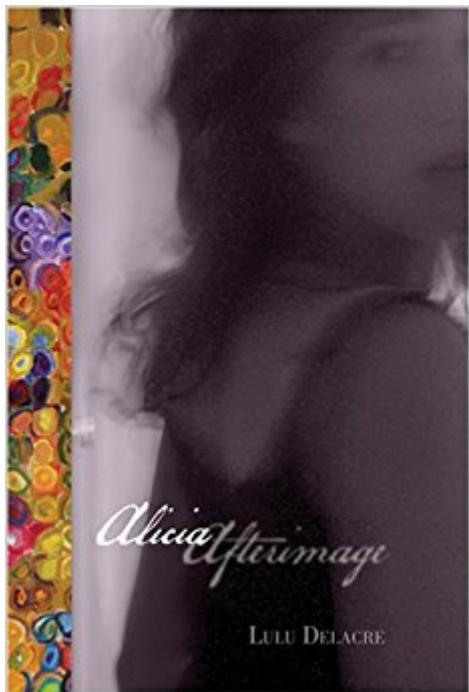


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# Alicia Afterimage



## **Synopsis**

On the evening of September 24, 2004, sixteen-year-old Alicia MarÃfÃ-a Betancourt was killed in a car accident. Popular, happy, fun-loving Alicia daughter, sister, and friend to so many gone in an instant. How would those left behind cope with such a sudden, devastating loss? Wrestling with grief, anger, mortality, and spirituality, Alicia's loved ones struggle to create a lasting place in their hearts for someone who is no longer a physical presence. They share joyful and painful memories, and discover the resilient power of enduring friendship and love. In time, each person finds a way to heal while keeping Alicia's vibrant spirit alive for those who knew her, and those who never will. Alicia Afterimage is a remarkable story of loss and recovery, but mostly it is a story of love. In this moving tribute to an extraordinary girl, readers will find a pathway through grief and a road map to remembrance. It is a book of comfort for all teens and adults who seek a way to ease the pain of losing someone they cherished.

## **Book Information**

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Grade Level: 9 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Grade 7 Up  
•Delacre has dedicated this slim volume to "all grieving teens," and while it is published as a work of fiction, the author's note explains that her 16-year-old daughter did, in fact, die in a car accident in 2004. She relates how her mourning process involved interviewing many of Alicia's friends about their relationship with the pint-sized, exuberant Puerto Rican American.

Resources on teen grief and teen-driver safety, as well as a photo of Alicia, are appended. Though

the point of view shifts from chapter to chapter, the narrative begins and ends with Alicia's mother, starting with the fateful night of the teen's date with a boy who speeds, loses control, and crashes into a telephone pole, killing her instantly. The chapters that focus on her friends, including the driver who survives the crash, don't provide any kind of cohesive narrative, reporting instead memories and events that form a two-dimensional portrait of Alicia: a perfect angel of a daughter, a true and fun-loving friend, a gifted dancer, and someone who always gave more than she took. Throughout the book, faint line sketches appear like shadows beneath the text. While reading the 13 nearly indistinguishable teen accounts of Alicia might be good bibliotherapy for those who have suffered a loss, this afterimage turns into an overexposure of pain that appeals to a sense of pathos without providing satisfaction as fiction. •Suzanne Gordon, Peachtree Ridge High School, Suwanee, GA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Delacre's beloved 16-year-old daughter died in a car crash four years ago. In her first novel, the picture-book artist has fictionalized the words of 13 of Alicia's real-life friends and family members, who talk about their grief and anger in a series of terse, third-person accounts. The spare interior monologues create a vivid collage portrait of the dynamic teen. The friends speak about how they met her and what they did together, from text-messaging to dancing, as well as the mementos they have of her mischief and loving support. The memories are of both small moments and big events, such as Alicia's quinceañera era. Mamá feels guilt (how does a parent balance freedom and protection?), and also anger at "The Driver," a teen date who is never named and whose recklessness caused the crash. Every view of Alicia is perfect ("there isn't anyone who doesn't like her"), but idealization is part of the grieving process. With its messages about healing and a list of appended resources, this is an excellent title for grief counseling. Grades 7-12. --Hazel Rochman

People please don't miss this book--it's so important for us all, young & old alike! I'm sure just about everyone has lost someone close to them in a tragic way & even if you have not, please read this book to add to your arsenal of how to deal with life. So many of us faced with tragic circumstances stumble & flounder, but Lulu Delacre has given us a guide to help put one foot in front of the other & try to handle grief. Not only a tribute to her beloved daughter, *Alicia Afterimage* can help us learn how think about even little things in our lives to avoid disastrous reactions to stressful situations. Cathy Bonnell, LibrarianPhoenix, AZ

Alicia Afterimage sat next to my bed for a bit before I finally cracked it open. I'm not sure if I was avoiding becoming emotional or that I thought the stories would open deeper pains. I did indeed cry, but they were predominantly tears of joy in celebration of Alicia's marvelous life. For the chapters on people I know, their story resonated with me the most. I could picture exactly the bouncing ladybug dilly boppers in Baltimore, Alicia & Vicky's daily search for poptarts, and Alicia's expressive face that shared sympathy, excitement, and truth all wrapped into one. Although I could not fully relate to the stories of her other friends, I found comfort in knowing that other people experienced Alicia the way I did: full of love, heart, energy, and *joie de vivre*. She was gifted with the sincere ability to befriend all types of people and to add a unique spark to each of their lives. Her homemade cards and talent of listening was bestowed on all. The book provided me with a heartfelt snapshot into Alicia's multiplying effect of compassion on this world. No matter the social niche someone fit into, Alicia was there with a genuine smile. Thank you Lulu for creating such a beautiful work. You meld humor with sadness, joy with pain, and the result is a retrospective not only on God's great gift of Alicia, but a truthful narrative on teenage suffering. You did not shy away from the pain of Alicia's death, but you proved that celebration of her life and cherishing of our memories with her is one way that we can grieve. We cannot repress our emotions, rather in sharing them we can come closer together and ease the agony of Alicia's loss.

The author of this book suffered a terrible loss. Her daughter was killed in a car accident at the young age of 16. This is happening to teens each day all over the world. This book is a memoir of the author's daughter Alicia. It shares stories from her friends and family. It tells of how they are dealing with the loss and trying to heal each in their own way. I like the fact that it listed resources on teen grief and driver's safety at the end of the book. I would recommend this to all teens. I feel like they can all learn a lot from this memoir.

Sixteen years is way too short to live in. "Alicia Afterimage" is a story of overcoming the loss of such a short life. Her family grieves over the loss of a daughter and a sister, her school mourns the loss of a friend. Her loved ones battle their grief, in this tale that illustrates the effects of it in the hearts of many. Each chapter covers a important person in her life and what she had left behind. "Alicia Afterimage" is much recommended to any teenager who has lost a close friend.

This book is primarily a book for teens about teens grieving the death of their friend. I could see how

the process (the interviews and writing of it) would be healing for Alicia's family, friends, and classmates at school. It is written in 3rd person, which makes the mother seem a little detached, but it also makes for a kind of separation which is probably easier for a grieving teen to read and deal with. A book like this would have been very helpful for my teenage friends and I when we found out a week after graduation our friend Scott Boland had been killed in a car accident. I remember acutely the pain and confusion we felt. And how going to his funeral was the saddest thing I had ever had to do in my 17 years of living. As I read through the book I noticed that many similar themes with those of us dealing with the death of a smaller child. Seeing or hearing messages from our lost loved ones. Anger- and I was very curious how that would be resolved as to the driver of the car, who was a student at the same school. Not being able to say goodbye. Time too short with our child. And then I came to the final chapter, the perspective of Mama. And was struck once again with the fact that the death of a child is the worst thing a mother can go through. No matter what age the child. And I felt I related to the changes the mother describes. "She had gone through an event that shattered life as she had known it, and her priorities had shifted... She was no longer afraid of being hurt, for there could not possibly be any pain deeper than that of losing a child. Her empathy grew..." "In time Mama began to recognize the signs of a spiritual connection to Alicia- a ladybug in the most unlikely of places... And more vivid dreams. Mama became acutely aware of all these surprising occurrences that seemed to carry messages. So she began to heed her inner voice: She learned to act on her instincts, following her heart instead of her head." I'm glad I didn't just discard this book as a book for grieving teens. I'm glad to have read it; to again realize that our children are our children and their leaving us too early causes pain that a mother feels no matter how long she has with her child. [SteppingStonesBlog.blogspot.com](http://SteppingStonesBlog.blogspot.com)

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