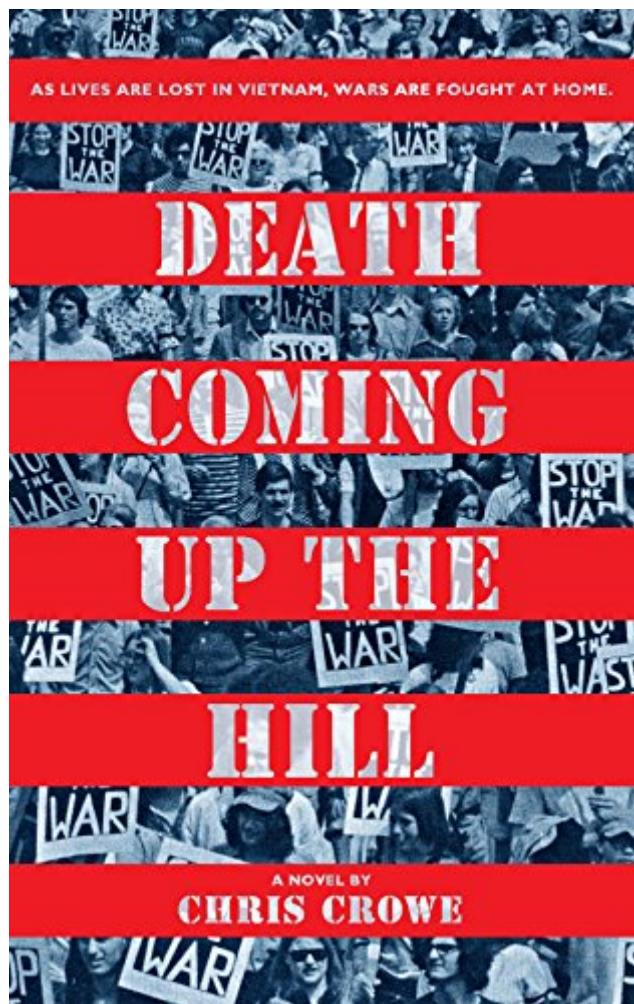


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# Death Coming Up The Hill



## Synopsis

It's 1968, and war is not foreign to seventeen-year-old Ashe. His dogmatic, racist father married his passionate peace-activist mother when she became pregnant with him, and ever since, the couple, like the situation in Vietnam, has been engaged in a "senseless war that could have been prevented." When his high school history teacher dares to teach the political realities of the war, Ashe grows to better understand the situation in Vietnam, his family, and the wider world around him. But when a new crisis hits his parents' marriage, Ashe finds himself trapped, with no options before him but to enter the fray.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I see Death coming up the hill, and I am not ready to meet him." Most powerful stanza in the entire book! Wow! I read this in just a couple of hours, as it really flows so easily--and I didn't want to put it down! Chris Crowe did an amazing job writing the entire novel in Haiku! Beautifully done! Date: 1968. Ashe is a seventeen year old young man living with parents who "had" to get married in

college and should not have remained married as long as they have. He falls in love for the first time with a special and unique young woman who has major concerns of her own but a loving family life. Ashe has many worries on a personal level. Oh, yes, and then there was that war in Vietnam. More worry for Ashe--the possibility of being drafted. There was Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination; there was Robert Kennedy's assassination; there were hundreds of young Americans dying every day far away from home fighting a war no one believed in. Lots to think about! This has now become one of my favorite books. Thank you, Chris Crowe, for, once again, writing a "treasure" for me!

I really enjoyed the layout of this book, meaning the haiku style throughout the book. The story of Ashe really opened my eyes to what life would have been like during the Vietnam War, a perspective that is hard to get 40 years afterward. It was a quick read (maybe two hours), but a very good one. I count this book as one of the best, if not the best, I have read this year.

A very interesting book for teenage students. The story is set in 1968 and brings light on a time when we struggled with the Vietnam Conflict and race relations in the United States. I think the book would help students understand the political and racial issues that teenagers had to live with in the 60's.

This interesting text engages from the opening sentence and keeps the reader intrigued throughout. A fast, but evocative read for anyone interested in the events surrounding the Vietnam War.

I've rarely read a war book that touched me this way. Chris' writing touched on a lot of points I was faced with before I was deployed. This is a must read.

It ends maybe under an average note. It ended quickly, I think this book could have been better. That's why I give it three stars.

I enjoyed the book. In fact I could not put this young adult fiction book down until I had finished it.

"The eastern world it is explodin'/Violence flarin', bullets loadin'. You're old enough to kill but not for votin'/You don't believe in war, but what's that gun you're totin'." -- Barry McGuire, 1965 from "Eve of Destruction""War! What is it good for? Absolutely nothing! Say it again!" -- Edwin Starr, 1969 from "War! What is it Good For?""All we are saying is give peace a chance." -- John Lennon, 1969

book is a collection of 976 haikus, Japanese poem structure consisting of 17 syllables per poem. The first haiku is dated April of 1969 by Ashe, 17. It is also a retrospective of his life in re the backdrop of the Vietnam War (1957 - 1975). I learned that the 16,592 syllables in all 976 of the haikus were a symbol of the 16,592 U.S. casualties of that war. (The haikus and the arrangement on each page is reminiscent of Ellen Hopkins' books. While her prose is not in haiku form, the poetic appearance on each page is very similar.) Ashe, like Dougie in Pete Hautman's "Invisible" has an inordinate attachment to the number 17. Like his unappealing counterpart in "Invisible," Ashe is a very likable character whose bond with the number 17 is due to his affection for baseball star Dizzy Dean and others. For Ashe, 17 in the late 1960s is a turning point. He is on the precipice of adulthood. He is old enough to drive, to give blood, to enlist in the service. Ironically he is unable to vote. In 1971 President Nixon lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. In 1968-69 Ashe is legally able to make adult decisions such as being able to marry or own property, he is not able to vote. Ashe's life is like a precursor to the 1960s. He has a racist Archie Bunker for a father and a peace activist mother. They only married because Ashe was on the way. In 1951 when Ashe was born, Ashe's mother, was a flower child slightly ahead of her time. Ashe's father was a former football star, a boorish bigot and an all around ass. This book is a good history lesson about the Vietnam War. Ashe prefaces each entry with the date and the number of weeks into the year. The haikus are an effective way of reinforcing the atrocities of the war and the unrest of the times, which saw riots and assassinations. "Don't you understand, what I'm trying to say?/And Can't you feel the fear that I'm feeling today? If the button is pushed, there's no running away,/There'll be no one to save with the world in a grave. Take a look around you, boy, it's bound to scare you, boy./But you tell me over and over and over again my friend, Ah, you don't believe we're on the eve of destruction." -- Barry McGuire, 1965 The war is not confined to southeast Asia. There is a domestic war going on in Ashe's home. Ashe's parents clash. They are like Robert Kennedy and Jimmy Hoffa, a bad mismatch that can only end badly. Ashe aptly uses war themed descriptions about the "cold war" between the warring couple and how he grew up in "divided territory" and in "no man's land." Vietnam hits closer to home when Ashe's girlfriend learns that her brother is MIA. The family deteriorates and ultimately Ashe becomes the half brother of a sister whose father is black. It ends on a tragic note of irony. The "death" in this title is not only apt, but is also a metaphor for a death of a family unit; the death of values and relentless and seemingly endless and completely needless war. "There's battle lines being drawn./Nobody's right if everybody's wrong. Young people speaking their minds/Getting so much resistance from behind." -- Buffalo Springfield, 1967 Bob Dylan's 1963 magnum opus "The Times, They Are A Changing;" Edwin Starr's 1969 hit "War! What is it Good

For;" Barry McGuire's "Eve Of Destruction;" Buffalo Springfield's "For What It's Worth" and John Lennon's "Give Peace a Chance could well be the soundtrack of this book.

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