

From literacy educator **Deborah Hicks** comes a gripping account of one woman's journey of hope and discovery with her students – girls growing up in America's most invisible poverty.



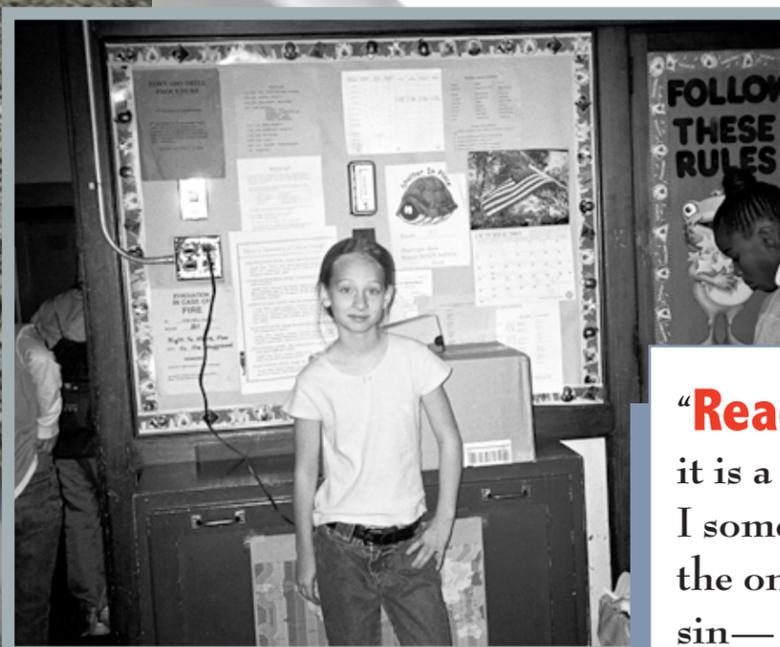
DEBORAH HICKS

**THE ROAD OUT**  
A TEACHER'S ODYSSEY IN POOR AMERICA

"This is an extraordinary, eye-opening, riveting book about hidden girlhoods." —Lee Smith, author of *The Last Girls*

**"The Road Out** is vital and enriching. I think it's an important book that should be required reading for every American who's concerned with education of the poorest and most forgotten in our society."

—Stephen King, author of *On Writing*



**"Read this book,** it is a cure for what I sometimes think is the only unforgivable sin— despair."

—Dorothy Allison,  
author of *Bastard Out of Carolina*

**"T**his stunning book will open your eyes and break your heart. Reminiscent of Robert Coles' magisterial *Children of Crisis*, **The Road Out** is the best book I've read on the inner lives of working-class girls."

—Mike Rose, author of *Back to School*

Can one teacher truly make a difference in her students' lives when everything is working against them? Can a love for books and learning help the most vulnerable of youth create roads out of poverty? Deborah Hicks set out to give one group of girls something she never had: a class for the gifted - a chance to read literature, to write, and to dream. *The Road Out* leads us deep into the worlds of seven girls coming of age in a Cincinnati neighborhood that once offered jobs and hope for migrants from Appalachia but today is a deteriorating cityscape - a ghetto.

This is a moving story about girls who have lost their childhoods, but who face the street's torments with courage and resiliency. "I want out," says 10-year-old Blair, a tiny but tough girl who is severely poor and yet deeply imaginative and precocious. Hicks conveys to her students a sense of the power of literature and of a sisterhood that will help them through the toughest years of early adolescence. The author's own life story – from a poorly educated girl in a small mountain town to a writer, teacher, and now social entrepreneur – infuses this chronicle with a message of hope.

[www.theroadout.net](http://www.theroadout.net)