

Booklist

Chilling memories of horror and suffering

Him, Chanrithy. *When Broken Glass Floats:*

Growing Up Under the Khmer Rouge.

April 2000. 288p. illus. Norton, \$23.95

(ISBN 0-393-04863-2). DDC: 959.604.

By Vanessa Bush

Published: April 15, 2000

Him survived the brutal regime of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge and here recounts the four years in a labor camp that darkened and shortened her childhood. She was 10 in 1975 when the Khmer Rouge overtook her country in what she calls the time of broken glass. Feeling a survivor's responsibility to do so, Him vividly recalls the brutality of the camps, the strict social control, and alienation from family that the Khmer Rouge enforce. At the start of the conflict, her affluent family included 12 children. Only five survived, but they manage to keep their concept of family and their humanity intact though the "killing fields" of Cambodia. Him's harrowing experiences encompassed the traumas of massacres, torture, and other cruelties. After those four years of horror, Him describes herself as having been reincarnated in a new body "but with an old soul." Twenty-five years after the Khmer Rouge's reign of terror expired, Him's memoir is a grim, gut-wrenching reminder of its violence.

YAC: *Chilling memories of horror and suffering; for high-school classes. KS*