

80 Poems

Roger Wayne Turkington

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Roger Wayne Turkington's transformative collection *80 Poems* offers wisdom within its musical verses.

The book's prevalent themes include family, childhood memories, and relationships. "Family" examines the delight of belonging. Nostalgic thoughts and insights derived from years of experience appear in poems like "Wisdom," while romantic strands come in entries like "Love at First Sight," which explores a long and enduring love. Religious concepts also arise. The poems reveal the heart of the poet, creating a connection that invites seeing familiar events in a new and deeper way.

The poems adhere to a variety of structures. The book's free verse poems rely on consonance and assonance to create rhythm. Poems like "Miss Contrary" make use of quatrain stanzas that accentuate their verses' lyrical qualities, and employ wordplay for lightness. Shorter, single stanza poems use end rhymes to create their rhythm:

*Once was a lady
Miss Noitsnot
Contrary lady
Miss Noitsnot*

*She ne'er said maybe
Just no, it's not
Shady lady
Miss Noitsnot*

Striking symbolism arises—of turbulent and forbidding waves and a shaking raft to convey difficult times, for example—and is surprising and diverse enough to be of interest. Metaphors capture natural phenomena in enchanting ways, as with "By sunlit sparkling wavelets laughter" and "Heart strings bowed by swirling wind." "Vale of Dreams" uses evocative language to bring scenes to life:

*Your golden halo glory revealed
To ultimate fulfillment you appealed
Each scintilla seemed near perfect
Our union was swift,
Our love act sublime*

Poems vacillate between having straightforward meanings and requiring deep interpretation. For the most part, though, uncomplicated language makes the poems' messages direct and accessible.

Points-of-view shift between first-person and omniscient perspectives, creating a sense of balance. Some poems

reveal personal, intimate thoughts, such as of pain after a lovers' separation. The collection's love poems are heartfelt and emotive. Other entries are more general and less serious.

Continuity exists between most poems, which draw on similar themes and structures, but deviations from these general and overarching connections makes the final product feel not wholly cohesive. Breaks from the general seriousness arise in places, as with the whimsical "Eventually," which offers reprieve before the depression and recovery themes of "Wilderness Traveled." Anticipation arises with the knowledge that every page is likely to contain a different and surprising entry.

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EDITH WAIRIMU (May 23, 2019)

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