FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Spiritual

Amy Inspired
Bethany Pierce
Bethany House
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At some point everyone experiences rejection from multiple angles. When professional and personal disappointments collide, failure leers from the side of the road like a taunting demon. Protagonists faced with this stereotypical crisis grace the pages of fiction in all genres.

Amy Inspired opens with a heroine in this predicament, but leads to unanticipated results. An English professor in Copenhagen, a small Ohio town, believes she has settled for a desk in academia when what she really wanted was a career as a writer. Publishers have declined her manuscripts, and she's recently broken up with her boyfriend. Her self-confidence compromised, Amy Gallagher stifles her talent in pessimism and watches her creative drive plummet.

She is, therefore, neither at her best nor prepared when she meets Eli Morretti, a gifted artist struggling with his own setbacks and disillusionments. Eccentric and temporarily downtrodden, he moves in with Amy and her roommate Zoe. Eli is good-looking, intellectual, and a balm to her senses, but she proceeds with the caution her religious background has instilled. He unsettles her as much as he intrigues her. Though a gentle friendship forms between them, Eli may be attached to another. He leaves to further his ambitions in upstate New York at the Pendleton Artist Residency…but Amy and Eli's relationship is far from over.

This exceptional story is a tender portrayal of love without the artificial frills of a capitalistic venture. At the heart of Pierce's novel is the real source of inspiration in imaginative endeavors. Eschewing the typical perception of attainment in the fine arts and its emphasis on money or fame, this perceptive author presents the natural development of an idealistic, spiritual motivation for creative work. Though classified as a romance, the book probes deeply into the genuine emotions that spur creativity and provides a revealing examination of the false pretenses that stall artistic fulfillment.

Bethany Pierce holds a master's degree in creative writing. After a stint as an English

professor in Ohio, she moved to Charlottesville, North Carolina, where she writes and works at an art studio. *Feeling for Bones*, her first book, was named one of the Best Books of 2007 by *Publishers Weekly*.

Amy Inspired is a learning experience for those who wonder what constitutes achievement. What people often think of as success is not only ephemeral, but may be subject to definition. Pierce starts with what could have been a trite excursion but bypasses the expected turns and accelerations. Instead, she crafts a lingering and thoughtful trip along the scenic route, heading for somewhere more nourishing.

Julia Ann Charpentier