

Beauty of Morality

Pierre Edens Sully

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Pierre Edens Sully makes a strong entrance with his first volume of poetry, *Beauty of Morality*. In the collection, current social issues intersect with more abstract subjects like lust and love. The poignant pieces combine a wealth of life experience with genuine, infectious hope for humanity.

While the book is so intimate that the author seems to have written it just for himself, it is also accessible to anyone searching for a sense of belonging. Sully's voice shifts from first to third person, adding to the depth of the book and intensifying the volume. The collection is broken into three parts: "Romance," "Humanity," and finally, a lengthy *mise-en-scène* wherein Sully constructs an intricate portrait of a well-lived life. Footnotes permeate the poems, but in a clever, David Foster Wallace-like manner, serving as both clarifications and observations.

One of the most memorable poems in the romance-designated portion of the book is "Do not break with me." The six-part piece is at once a familiar lament and an intimate celebration of the author's beloved. The lines "this little expression of tenderness is going / until my soul, I swallow it a sweet cook" allude to a difficult past, but also bring hope.

Another standout piece, one that encapsulates the humanity section, is "Dialogue between two brothers." This lengthy poem is a relevant glimpse into the divide between family members who support opposing political parties, with surprising but all-too-familiar lines like "by little to change American in forming / its prospective matter of course."

The *mise-en-scène* is a striking departure from the lyrical poetry in the majority of the book, but Sully makes the style his own. Lines like "my soul at last fills itself with lyricism" and "the conflicts between the presidents are only / the proceedings between particulars, we see" make the collection truly memorable. These descriptions create an immersive experience and allow people into the author's world, whether it's his real, personal life or a fictional creation.

Beauty of Morality is a framework for poetry collections and a great example of long-form work, all meant to provide a snapshot into the author's current state of being. While it picks apart the human condition, Sully's volume also takes time to put it back together. It's a timely and solid investment for anyone seeking solace or affirmation in humanity, or simply in themselves.

LILLIAN BROWN (December 21, 2016)

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