

Between the Mirrors and Other Poems

Garth Kellett

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This contemplative poetry collection addresses both grand and everyday subjects in thoughtful, lyrical language.

Garth Kellett's poetry collection *Between the Mirrors and Other Poems* highlights feelings and emotions in unusual ways, bringing to light their universal qualities. A love for language shines through, and thoughtfully crafted metaphors run throughout.

The title poem seizes upon an ordinary moment in a bathroom, as the observer stands between the reflections of two facing mirrors, thus looking upon an image that repeats on into infinity. This experience sparks childlike wonder:

*I am caught and snared
in the middle of a palindrome
that my quizzing eyes of the past and future
have created.*

This remarkable notion, of standing at the center balance of a life's origin and end, is powerfully rendered.

This project includes both structured poetry and free verse, incorporating sonnets, pantoums, and villanelles. Form poems are its specialty, including "A New Role for Maman," with verses that harbor lovely images and cadence:

*Behind her, the flat days wind up like scrolls;
weeks flutter by like damp and dying leaves,
and the years she places now in pigeonholes.*

In addition to personal topics, the collection touches upon well known works of art, literature, and historical figures, including Frida Kahlo, the *Mona Lisa*, and *Robinson Crusoe*. Whether poems deal with the particular or the grandiose, they more often than not take singular stances that also make collective sense. In the seemingly paired pieces "Sleeping Beauty's Insomnia" and "Lazarus Wants to Sleep," poems refreshingly argue that neither the fairy-tale princess nor the biblical figure has a choice when it comes to sleeping or dying, or waking or being revived. Fate and destiny play their parts in these stories, something over which nobody has control. The poet's past work—he is a retired Anglican priest—seems to inform such musings powerfully.

The collection does contain occasional disruptions in lyricism, as well as some awkward word choices near the ends of lines. However, the collection is generally editorially flawless, and its design is attractive and professional. The cover is simple, perhaps even a bit too plain, and doesn't quite fit with the floral embellishments at the bottom of each page. At the same time, this simplicity makes some sense, as it draws focus to the nimble elegance of the meditative compositions within its covers.

Mortality, love, and memories—these are the big issues addressed time and again in the collection through the clever use of metaphor and rhyme. The poems are personal to be sure, yet also universal. Readers who enjoy contemplative

poetry will be drawn to Garth Kellett's *Between the Mirrors and Other Poems*.

OLIVIA BOLER (March 4, 2016)

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