Clarion Review

Body, Mind & Spirit

Cheers to Life: True to Myself
A. H. Cameron Strother
First Projection, Inc.
978-0-9832504-1-8
Four Stars (out of Five)

Inspiration can be found almost everywhere, from a park bench to a fortune cookie. This is one of the main messages in Cheers to Life: True to Myself, a book that challenges people to "live with purpose," to take a moment to live the life one loves, and to celebrate the small joys around every corner. The collection opens with an A. C. Judge quotation that explains how "today is the gift we must learn to embrace."

A. H. Cameron Strother's reflections help people find inner peace and learn how to better understand themselves and the world around them. The most successful sections are short and compact. For example, in "Acceptance," the author writes, "To be content with life / You must first / Be at peace / With the private person that / Lives inside you." In such passages, every word seems considered and the main idea shines brightly.

"Courage" is a standout section because it begins in one place and ends in another. At first, the reflection explains how life can sometimes feel overwhelming. By the end, the reader is jolted into action when Strother states, "Grasp opportunity to / Turn the page / Rewrite the story." The direct verbs and short lines push the reader to take charge of his or her life.

The passages in this text offer readers motivation and encouragement for day-to-day living. However, some veer too closely to the obvious. For example, in "Life's Lessons," Strother writes, "Life's lessons are learned through trials. / LEARN from them. / Failure re-defined: / Life's precious story." The repetition of the title rings too loudly, deafening the rich and meaningful message.

The book's formatting sometimes distracts from its insight. Boldfaced key words and enlarged text are not necessary because Strother's ideas are clear and universal. The illustrations of flowers, bees, and hummingbirds are a creative way to frame the reflections; however, it seems strange that with such rich metaphors already in place there aren't short poems or

passages focused on relating these images to the fruits of life.

Strother does not deny that the world has its challenges. The beauty of the inspirational passages contained in this collection is that they push one to reflect, to accept, and to move on. Strother asks the reader to celebrate each day and to hold tight to deeply held beliefs. After all, “life is waiting.”

Lisa Bower