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CLARION REVIEW ★★☆☆☆

Day Dreams and Reality

Safiyyah Ar-Raheem Himes
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Safiyyah Ar-Raheem Hines expresses the turbulent emotions created when one's daydreams and fantasies about life and relationships hit the hard wall of reality. Hines admits that the pain of having made life choices without having first considered their likely outcome is the source of these cries of pain and she offers her poems as a warning: "To the young in mind and heart take this life lesson and do not travel the same path." Since she has admittedly walked that path herself and gained wisdom from her errors she also realizes that it is necessary for those who have made mistakes to learn from them and move on saying "To the tried and true souls value all that you have been through. After all it's what has made you you!"

Born and raised in Boston Massachusetts Hines earned a bachelor's degree in social work from Wheelock College in Boston and now resides in Savannah Georgia. The turbulent emotional life featured in her poetry began when Hines found herself "in love" at twelve and unprepared for the emotional consequences of that experience. Dysfunctional relationships thwarted expectations hopes unrealized and errors of judgment that cause pain to others as well as oneself take a toll on one's self esteem making it almost certain that these mistakes will be repeated in the future.

Throughout history poetry has served as an outlet for the deepest grief and the most exalted joys and has given hope comfort and companionship to its writers as well as to its readers. A good poem distills emotion using carefully chosen words and various forms and devices to create not static images but movement and rhythm with the capacity to drive the emotion directly into the reader's heart. Reading the best poetry one experiences the events and emotions in the poem as though they were one's own. When there are flaws in the design of the poem this process may not occur as the reader is made aware of bumpy rhythm misused words or lack of regularity in rhyming poems.

Some of the poems in this volume have the rhythm of street-poetry or Rap and could be danced as well as read: "Lying Lonely" is one such poem and in spite of its imagery of lying serenely on one's side the rhythm of "relentless thoughts" takes over filling it with movement. Other poems seem to stumble in the dance as they search for a beat and finding none present their message as bits of prose ("Determination").

Safiyyah Ar-Raheem Hines has a vivid imagination a good feel for rhythm and the courage and determination needed to bring her work to the public; she would benefit greatly from the wisdom experience and guidance of a teacher or mentor who could help her refine her passion as well as from joining with others of like mind to study the works of great poets read aloud and offer critiques of each other's work. These tools have helped many to bring their work to the place where it becomes art—a goal which is only achieved by discipline and thorough knowledge of one's craft.

KRISTINE MORRIS (August 14, 2008)

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