Clarion Review

Humor

Driving on the Wrong Side of the Road: Humorous Views on Love, Lust, and Lawn Care
Diana M. Estill
Brown Books Publishing Group
978-1-933285-41-2
Four Stars (out of Five)

Buckle Up, and Please Keep Hands Inside the Book At All Times

Humorist Diane Estill is highly skilled in detailing stories of the mundane with a whimsical spin and equally adept at taking everyday life situations and eliciting a chuckle or twelve from her readers. Many times, the laughter comes at the author's expense, which is rightfully understood since one person's experience with a vacation worthy of a screen adaptation starring Chevy Chase is often another's guilty pleasure. We laugh because we're relieved these things didn't happen to us, and it is why Estill, a newspaper columnist, will likely broaden her readership through the release of this, her first humor collection.

Estill will be known to readers of *The Dallas Morning News* and *The Murphy Messenger* for "The View Askew," her columns which feature personal slices of life served in the spirit of Erma Bombeck, which are now collected in *Driving on the Wrong Side of the Road: Humorous Views on Love, Lust and Lawn Care*. True to the book's title, askew family vacations are well represented as Estill recounts vacation disasters ranging from mere head-shaking disturbances to white-knuckled adventures in countries where one must drive, in our view, on the wrong side of the road. Estill cleverly evokes a distraught husband, swiping at every lever and knob on a foreign car as it curls around one of those eternal circular stops along the road, and it is nothing short of hilarious. The reader is grateful to be home. We read Estill's account of the digital camera that missed the glorious whale frolicking in the ocean and nod in appreciation, knowing how well a disposable counterpart might have worked.

Estill is practical (learn how to eliminate nuclear waste with an eighty-eight cent bottle of bleach), an expert with football terminology ("Fourth and one - A period of seconds preceding either an eruptive scream of jubilation or a dangerous time for house pets.") and is certainly not a liar, regardless of what the cable company says. She's quick to point out what's

best for Mom on Mother's Day aside from flowers ("To be assured that any offspring who becomes a writer will suffer selective memory.")

Over fifty columns comprise the collection; many are short enough to be enjoyed during Super Bowl commercial breaks or in between glances at the map as your significant other negotiates the Autobahn with wide, panicked eyes. Grouped in corresponding categories that are familiar territory to humor writers, with a few Texas-sized tributes, the anecdotes in *Driving* are certain to gain mileage for Estill's writing career.

Kathryn Lively