**Clarion Review**

General

**Echos**

Samantha Knyght
CreateSpace
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Three Stars (out of Five)

Evidence of belief in reincarnation and past life regression exists as far back as 4000 BC. Today, people continue to search for meaning in their dreams, recalled memories, and waking visions to uncover clues to past life experiences. Through hypnotism and other relaxation methods, regression practitioners attempt to guide subjects in deciphering what these intimations might mean.

Samantha Knyght first studied hypnotherapy in dental school at Tufts College, learning how to manage patient pain during dental procedures. When one of her patients unexpectedly experienced a past life regression while under hypnosis, the incident sparked Knyght's interest in helping others experience this phenomenon.

Her first novel, *Echos*, tells the story of two people who may have shared previous lives. Ami and Daniel grow up in separate parts of the United States, with no knowledge of each others' existence. The narrative centers on the latter half of the twentieth century, but includes flashbacks to other lives, times, and places. When the two finally meet as young adults, they feel a strong mutual attraction but encounter obstacles that prevent them from accepting a relationship that holds the promise of true love.

While exploring Atlantic City's boardwalk as a young woman, Ami is pulled into a fortune teller's multicolored tent. The fortune teller knows Ami's deceased grandmother's name and refers to a message Ami received from her grandmother just after the old woman died: "Two, made as two, and yet, one. It is a very rare thing."

Shortly after he meets Ami, Daniel experiences a similar encounter with an aged shaman when he visits a remote village in the Amazon. After his return home, he reluctantly tells her, "Ami—she said she knew you—and she was your mother—that you and I had a connection many times in the past…."

Unable to resolve their conflicts, Ami and Daniel separate, and Ami eventually resigns herself to marrying someone else. After several years of an unsatisfactory marriage, she delivers twins, a girl and a boy. The first sight of her son's face shocks Ami. "When she turned her head to look at her son, she came face-to-face with a miniature Dan!"

The plot of this romantic tale moves forward at a pleasing pace, with many twists and turns that hold the reader's interest. Past life experiences and the inner thoughts of the main characters are helpfully delineated by italicized type. Words either left in when they should have been deleted, and vice versa, as well as clichés and repeated information take away from the book's professional credibility.

This novel will appeal to people who enjoy reading romance novels with a supernatural twist. Those who cannot accept the supposition that connections exist between past and present states of human existence may not be so interested.

*Margaret Cullison*