

POETRY

Everyone Loves Raymond

Raymond Reininger

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Four Stars (out of Five)

Raymond Reininger, New Jersey Senior Poet Laureate and author of the verse anthology *Silhouettes in White*, serves up a second delicious compilation called *Everyone Loves Raymond*. In his acknowledgements, the author asserts his writing has “gotten better” from his previous book. Old hands at poetry and tyros alike, will find little that needs improving in this delectable confection. Meditations on love and time mingle with narratives created by verse. Some of the poems are serious, some silly, yet each verse profound in its own way. In the same vein as witty limericks, Reininger’s poems often contain one or more unexpected turn of events to shock and delight readers.

The author’s use of poetic devices is exquisite. Some poems have a consistent rhyme scheme, while others have several rhyming couplets nestled among passages of free verse. Reininger also skillfully uses assonant and internal rhymes, e.g., *Reasons unaccepting of the causes of wrong, / Daylight’s participation in the presentation of the dawn*, and imperfect rhyme, e.g., *Only leaves another hole / Our weapons of war could make the world cold*. In his consistent use of varied rhyme schemes, the poet proves he is a topnotch lyricist. The repeated use of the ‘w’ sound in the line, *Our weapons of war could make the world cold*, additionally exemplifies the wonderful alliteration used in this volume. Furthermore, Reininger expertly personifies concepts and things. In his verses, breezes grasp, darkness exhales, and, *silence refuses to surrender*. Weird, wonderful similes appear, too. Flippant comments, *will settle like voice lint on a dresser top*. Moreover, descriptive neologisms crop up as well: *un-marriage*, *timeful*, and *unbudgeable*, to name but a few. The poet successfully couples standard poetic rules with his own conventions to create vivid imagery.

Scattered throughout this otherwise stellar work are enough punctuation mistakes to annoy. Apostrophes to indicate possession are underused, and some needless capitalization of nouns—e.g., Grocery Store—exists. Furthermore, compound nouns and adjectives often lack the necessary hyphens, thus providing confusion for readers at first glance. Other than these

distracting grammar errors, *Everyone Loves Raymond* is a worthwhile purchase for any poet or lover of poetry.

Jill Allen