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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ POETRY

Feelings Poetry: From the Heart

Gary McLauchlan
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In *Feelings Poetry*, Gary McLauchlan attempts to capture and convey the deep emotions of his heart. McLauchlan's more than sixty poems cover a wide variety of topics from family, prayer, teddy bears, the news, bullying, and natural occurrences like snow and storms to everything in between. It is clear to readers that McLauchlan likes to write poems about all of his experiences. His thoughts are simple observations that everyone can understand, even those who are not poetry connoisseurs.

Several poems, including "Criminal Record," "Adults Only," and "Search Engines Guilty, I" shed light on the author's background and views on pornography. In "Adults Only," McLauchlan says, "Porn Treated As Being Dirty / Can We Be Dirty Sexually / Seeing Adults Only For Other Adults Acting only / Are Adults Wrong Watching Pornography / Not To Everyone's Taste That's Agreed Partly / With A Lop Sided Opinion Against Materal Adults Only." While readers understand that he feels pornography has a place and is too often vilified, his sentiments here and elsewhere are muddled at best.

Feelings Poetry contains numerous grammatical and spelling errors. McLauchlan has chosen to capitalize each word in each poem; while his use of capitals is within his right as a poet, it makes reading the poems a tedious experience. In addition, the poet's phrasings are often wordy.

The author's name appears at the end of each poem, as does a footer, "Continued on the Next Page," when poems do not fit on one page. These elements make the reader feel like the author is talking down to them. The poems are arranged alphabetically by title, but a thematic organization might have deepened the emotional effect of the poems.

McLauchlan employs several favorite poetry devices that begin to feel tiresome over time. For example, he uses repetition habitually, and he frequently couples it with play with adjectives and adverbs. For example, "Everyone Loves Teddy Bears Cutely / Collectors Love Teddy Bears Valuably." The poems are rarely punctuated, which may bother some readers.

McLauchlan's commitment to self-expression is admirable, but he lacks depth in poetic craft and his poetic feelings and insights are rather pedestrian. As a result, *Feelings Poetry* reads more like a rough portfolio of unfinished drafts and sketches of ideas rather than a professional book full of polished pieces.

MELISSA WUSKE (October 16, 2012)

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