ForeWord Reviews

AUTOBIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR

For the Sender: Four Letters. Twelve Songs. One Story.

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Lyrics originate in unexpected places, expressions of the songwriter's personal experiences and memorable relationships, but what if a song was a manifestation of another life? In *For the Sender*, Alex Woodard delves into the pleasure and pain of strangers reaching out through the heartfelt words of letters.

This innovative memoir is Woodard's story with an altruistic twist. Along with a select group of collaborators he refers to as his family, he writes for people who choose to share with him their deepest emotions. Behind the scenes, this mesmerizing musician's existence is filled with the blows of the passage of time, ranging from the death of a beloved Labrador named Kona to the gradual deterioration and loss of his grandmother. Embedded in the shattered dreams of others, as expressed by his music, are his own broken links to buried feelings too gut-wrenching to confront.

As he moves beyond creative stagnation to active participation, Woodard discovers the key to meaningful happiness and real success. "In this new anonymity I begin to feel lighter and free, like a door has opened into a bright, airy room I've never seen, one that's been in my house the whole time but I always just walked past."

The author will amaze the uninitiated, while deterring fledgling songwriters from the aimless pursuit of glamour. His down-to-earth approach showcases the working aspect of the business, as opposed to the mere idea of fame at the top of a competitive profession. "Barely break-even touring is bookended by stalled personal and professional relationships and I find that sometimes chasing dreams is just that: a chase."

Woodard discusses the hidden elements of his soul with candid appraisal. "My hopes, dreams, and fears are all there, deep water running still under the moving currents of the songs."

Included with this small gift book is a music CD, featuring the songs discussed. With a strong country-and-western essence, this balladeer will attract dedicated lovers of the genre, along with an eclectic audience that gravitates toward intellectual messages as opposed to superficial pop lyrics. Divided into eight chapters with titles such as "The Autumn" and "The Box," Woodard's memoir is poetry in prose. His talent as a storyteller is apparent in his writing

as well as his music.

Alex Woodard lives in a small beach town north of San Diego. *For the Sender* is his literary debut, and a portion of the proceeds from each song on the CD will be donated to a cause chosen by the sender. For anyone intrigued by the inner workings of the artistic mind, Woodard's autobiography will afford a prolonged glimpse, tempered by a jarring dose of realism.

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