Clarion Review

Self-Help

Forever Sentimental: Agape Love, Volume Three
Kenyatta
iUniverse
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Three Stars (out of Five)

This “voyage through the many facets of love and human relationships” is one of a series of poetry and advice books by the author Kenyatta. A military veteran the author began his career writing poems for fellow troops to send to loved ones at home.

The theme of the book is that relationships can be celebrated and explored through poetry and prose. Written in first person each poem alternates with a “Life Lesson.” Poems and lessons are at least tangentially related providing thought-provoking ideas about the intensity and vulnerability common in relationships. Filled with need (“I’ve always needed something special / and long lasting; / I’ve always needed something / sweet and tender…”) praise (“When you came into the world / something wonderful happened”) and promises (“I will be the star / that brightens your darkest hour—“) many of the poems are enticing and beguiling.

The purpose of *Forever Sentimental Vol. III: Agape Love* is to provide poetry for individuals who seek more intimacy and to offer instructions on how to be successful in romantic relationships. The poems are effusive and emotional. A few are whimsical (“…all you have / is a bare bottom / an empty life / and wet titties / and toes.”). Most are positive but some are sorrowful (“These days in my life / at times / have been quite empty…”). All of the poems meet the purpose of the book. The author essentially invites the reader to borrow the words and use them to entice to say “I’m sorry” or to otherwise express a feeling.

The advice on romance is where the book takes on a different flavor. A sincere effort to balance the romantic with the practical much of the advice is sensible. Yet the basis of the advice the model Kenyatta follows is unclear. Is he helping people communicate better? Make better choices? Set better boundaries? Or—as it appears—is he freely flowing from one thought to another? A more distinct framework for the life lessons would have supplemented the author's lack of solid credentials in psychology.

The most perplexing enigma in the book is its subtitle since "agape" indicates brotherly nonsexual or selfless love. *Forever Sentimental Vol. III: Agape Love* is rooted upon personal needs for romantic love ("eros"). Even taken to transcendental heights the poems and lessons in the book do not reflect agape love. Nevertheless for those who yearn for romantic love the poems provide the words and the lessons provide the caution necessary to traverse through passionate encounters.