

Clarion Review ★★★★★

RELIGION

## Georgette, Where Are You? And Other Stories of God Interacting with His People

**Charlotte Poteet**

WestBow (Mar 24, 2017)

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*Reflecting a range of subjects and styles, Georgette, Where Are You? offers insights into faith and love.*

Charlotte Poteet's *Georgette, Where Are You?* collects fresh, inspirational stories that are crafted from a mixture of liveliness and imagination.

Reflecting elements of conservative Christian faith, the book's short stories are interspersed with a dozen or so poems; both focus on religious themes and practices. Stories have an autobiographical flavor, especially those that incorporate elements of nursing and home care. Stories reference daily interactions with God, hearing God in prayer, and regarding God as both knowable and mysterious.

The stories are brief, and the book encapsulates many ideas. The story "Georgette, Where Are You?" is about caring for the stranger, who just might be an angel in disguise. "An Altered Fairy Tale" uses a Bible study analogy comparing Cinderella to Christian believers to make the point that none is worthy of God's love and all are sinful. "The Wedding Rehearsal" uses the night before a wedding to make the point about how imperfect the church can be and still be important to God. In "All Things Redeemed," a terrible trip to hear Billy Graham speak finds the main character in the hospital, abandoned by her friend; it plays with both forgiveness and bitterness.

Generally written in the first person, the stories are immediate and personal, with the flavor of happy memories or disclosures between friends. Many have a Southern sensibility; some take place in Florida. The best trend longer, plumbing the depths of questions of faith, particularly around notions of forgiveness. Their lessons are effective and truthful. Within them, God is not distant, but rather an active presence who can be found in nursing homes, hospital rooms, and places where things fall apart and only silence is left. Many read less like stories and more like Bible lessons.

The book also includes a small collection of poetry. The poems are written in a free-verse style, with brief lines that tease out the theological nuggets from the stories. "Grace, Repentance, Freedom" moves between a Christian salvation message, sin, and a Bible passage. "Robin—Numbered and Noted" uses nature imagery to make the point that God knows all creatures great and small, and uses metaphors to strong effect. The poems, though few, are a powerful and brief encapsulation of the work that is done in the stories, distilling their messages down to a few well-chosen words.

Reading the collection is a mixed experience. Writing in the stories tends to be clunky, with too much exposition and not enough action. Elements are relayed rather than coming to life in the course of the tales. The poetry, on the other hand, is full of wonderful images and is very experiential.

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**JEREMIAH ROOD** (June 18, 2018)

*Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to*

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