

God Will Provide: Walking by Faith, Not by Sight

Len Mac Lellan

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Insightful and heartfelt, Len Mac Lellan's poetry collection reflects upon even difficult moments with inspiring gratitude.

Len Mac Lellan's endearing narrative poetry collection, *God Will Provide*, is centered on history, faith, family, and love.

The book is organized into four distinct parts. The entries of the first section focus on Mac Lellan's childhood and ancestry. The second section, about family and community, encompasses cherished moments, while the third is insightful on topics of forgiveness, friendship, gratitude, and faith. The fourth section contains poems that review Mac Lellan's experiences as a teacher. This clear organization moves well through Mac Lellan's personal history toward the present, while themes relating to faith, family, and love hold the whole project together.

The book also contains poems that focus on landscapes and nature; they involve breathtaking scenes and compelling imagery. "Glimpses" notes:

The sun, not yet visible on the horizon lit up the edges on the low-lying purple clouds making them appear as if surrounded by a distant fire blazing.

Faith runs beneath much of the book, even in entries darkened by tragedies; the overarching tone is hopeful. In "Storyteller," about a grandfather's recollection of the Great Depression, a mother is paid with food for her labor; a father, blinded, does any work he could get. Still, the scene is reflected upon with humor and positivity, despite the hard times that the family endured.

In an intimate turn, Mac Lellan's struggles and vulnerability in his roles as a father and a teacher are covered. "Out of the Ordinary" is about confronting overwhelming issues and fatigue while working toward a consistent, safe environment in a class of behaviorally challenged students. Other entries go beyond the family's stories: "Donald Johnny Murdock's Hospital Stay in 1943" is about the touching experience of a person hospitalized during the war who shouts in pain as soldiers in the same ward scold him. The poem's narrator has conversations with the shouting man, who includes him in his will.

Themes are emphasized, and musicality achieved, through devices like repetition, as in "Bravely Singing":

*To an unborn son, quietly singing To a boy of one, quietly singing To her he runs, quietly singing
Quietly singing the songs of Cape Breton.*

While the collection mostly employs free form verses, quatrains also appear, and the overarching diversity of form is engaging. Regular end rhymes are used to enhance the book's rhythm, while, in shorter poems, rhymes also help to underline themes and rhetorical questions. Even the book's brief verses are compelling.

Striking metaphors accentuate the emotions of the poems; in lines about death, the house in which loved ones once lived is described as a shell with a heart that's no longer beating. Insightful and heartfelt, Len Mac Lellan's poetry

collection gathers verses regarding past and present moments with inspiring effects.

EDITH WAIRIMU (April 27, 2020)

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