



Clarion Review

Autobiography & Memoir

Hidden Treasures

Louise Dupont

Trafford

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Three Stars (out of Five)

Louise Dupont's son Andre committed suicide in 2003 at the age of twenty-two. She wrote *Hidden Treasures* to share details of Andre's life, including a story that he wrote as a child, family memories, and the circumstances surrounding his suicide and its aftermath. Her goal is multifaceted: to raise awareness about suicide, focus on the positive, and heal her own pain. By focusing on her son's normal, mostly happy, and interesting short life, Dupont successfully maintains a fairly lighthearted tone, not an easy task for a grieving mother.

Hidden Treasures opens with *Lost in the Storm*, a short story that Andre wrote and illustrated when he was seven. Originally written in French (and accompanied by his mother's translation), the young boy's meticulous cursive penmanship and his endearingly primitive drawings are reproduced.

The plot of Andre's tale is simple and mildly dark, but would be appropriate for reading to small children. Dupont's book ends with more endearing artwork: memorial cards made by the students of a primary school where Andre worked until his death. The cards are lovely and haunting in their innocence. For example, one student wrote: "May you be at rest in your pollution-free world. I remember how you hated all the pollution in the world. You always rode your bicycle. It's too bad that you died, but I will always remember you."

The heart of *Hidden Treasures* is an eighteen-page narrative about Andre's life from childhood, his depression and suicide, and the aftermath. This section is enhanced by several high-quality photographs of Andre, his travels, family, and friends. Dupont's efforts to seek understanding and solace by finding meaning in coincidences are especially moving. For example, she writes, "One of Andre's last actions still intrigues me. On the day of his death, before leaving us forever, he taught his younger brother Christian how to juggle with fire. What is the significance of this act? I believe Andre was passing the flame on to his brother, to me and

to everyone who knew him.”

Hidden Treasures is a worthy tribute to Andre Dupont by his grieving mother. While the book’s primary audience is Andre’s family and those who knew him, people struggling with the suicide of a loved one may find this book helpful. Additionally, it might work well as an educational tool for children who have lost someone to suicide.

Patty Sutherland