

I Prescribe a Positive Vibe

Anthony G. Catalano

Xlibris (January 2010)

Softcover \$10.00 (73pp)

978-1-4415-8477-9

“See the big Picture / see what matters most / see the world as you should / see now its understood,” Anthony G. Catalano writes. Whether you call them poetry or rap, the works in I Prescribe A Positive Vibe are certainly positive. Lively energy and philosophy abound in this semi-autobiographical narrative, rap, poetry, and picture book.

Catalano, a native New Yorker, grew up in a pleasant neighborhood and has remained close with childhood friends. He moved to Florida, and at the age of twenty-one he met Donna, who would soon become his wife. They moved back to New York to begin a life together, but their dreams were not meant to be. At work on a construction project, Anthony stepped on a beam that was not properly secured and fell three stories. He was left as a C4-C5 quadriplegic, and Donna was unable to adjust to this new and unanticipated kind of life. After their divorce, Anthony eventually surrounded himself with a few who would help him live a quality life. He married again and enjoys his relationships with extended family.

The philosophy here is always upbeat, but rarely profound. Describing a new day, Catalano writes:

Now waking to your new day.

Remember, to blossom, the colors, you are today.

Watering each other, along the way.

We will share a garden, so plentiful and new.

This will be a garden bouquet, of me and you.

Only a few fragments scattered through the book really shine. In the brightest spot of the book, the poet writes, “As the tears of clouds, weep to the ground./ Jaggy bolts, striking, all around./ The roar of the sky, telling us its cry,/ I will water you, I will warn you./ Now it’s all up to you...”

The volume is designed as a gift book, and the layout is attractive. It contains photographs and rap-style poetry on uncrowded pages. While the book includes plenty of snapshots, a number of the photos are good enough to make readers wonder who took the shot. Since no credit is given to a photographer, readers are left to assume the best photos were found on the Internet.

The artistic skills, both in the visual and the verbal show potential, but the book has little to recommend it. Readers will admire the achievement and positive attitude of this publication, and some may find interest in the raps, but those who look for poetry of substance will be disappointed.

DAVID GEORGE (May 18, 2010)

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