Clarion Review

Poetry

Life Is a Treasure
Xlibris
Karen Ann Treasure
978-1-4568-5054-8
Three Stars (out of Five)

In *Life Is a Treasure*, her second published book of verse, Jamaican Karen Ann Treasure writes of passion won and lost, internal struggle, God, and loving oneself. The narrators in these stanzas include paramours, sexually adventurous couples, worshipful Christians, a mother who worries for her street-smart wild child, a confident career woman, a straight-talking mom without much education, and a poor man grateful for what little he has.

Treasure skillfully imbues every character with a distinct diction, cadence of speech, and worldview, successfully putting readers in the speakers' shoes. The lovely uncredited illustrations interspersed among the poems enhance the collection significantly. Although they are drawn in shades of gray, the artist captures the subtleties of facial expressions and body language, thereby further enriching the stanzas on the opposite page. The drawings capture people of African ancestry and perfectly complement the emotions in the verses they represent. These pictures provide much-needed positive images of Africans to readers of every skin color. With its poetic portrayals of diverse individuals who happen to have dark skin, Treasure's book effectively combats negative, stereotypical portraits.

Many of Treasure's verses have a rhyme scheme, or a few verses that rhyme. She often adds to her pleasing rhythms by including a refrain. The repeated cadence of such verses would make these poems easily adaptable into euphonious songs. Unfortunately, grammatical errors disrupt this book's mellifluous unity. Treasure uses words in the wrong context, e.g., writing "protege" when "prodigy" would make more sense. She often neglects to capitalize "he," "him," and "you" when talking about God. Sometimes, too, she omits prepositions or restructures a sentence to make it fit into her rhyme scheme. Without the needed prepositions or coherent sentence structure, the author's meaning is lost, and readers may become confused. These missteps occur frequently enough to be distracting. It is also irksome that the creator of the

superb illustrations is unknown; the signature accompanying the drawings is illegible. Surely, a designer with such talent deserves recognition. In the face of such beautiful words and drawings, such flaws are ultimately minor. Karen Ann Treasure's *Life Is a Treasure* is truly a jewel worth treasuring on the bookshelves of verse lovers everywhere.

Jill Allen