

Looking Out from the Inside: A Reflection of Poems

Eleanor Di Blasio

XlibrisUK (Jul 28, 2017)

Softcover \$51.57 (136pp)

978-1-5434-8637-7

Looking Out from the Inside is a diverse collection of poems that meditate on intriguing, universal themes.

Eleanor Di Blasio's *Looking Out from the Inside* is an enriching collection of poems that touches on a wealth of human experiences, from sex and relationships to contemporary American politics.

With no foreword or formal prelude, the only introduction to the poems is an alluring note from the author: "One's life has many twists and turns / But for everyone it is a lesson learned." Poems are then divided into ten thematic groups, including religion, the real world, tragedy, and romance.

Frequent rhyming and simple vocabulary are hallmarks of the poems, which become repetitive in the course of the collection, and veer toward the mundane. Scenarios are presented through various viewpoints; they are the most memorable feature of the collection. Subjects shift from a philandering golfer to a homeless wanderer, and all are believably, intimately captured.

One of the best poems is "October," a soothing, seasonal piece that makes familiar observations: children riding their bikes, the vestiges of summer, and signs of oncoming winter. Sensory details are evocative, and the closeness and familiarity that the poem brings forth are a common theme within the collection's strongest pieces.

"I Just Don't Know" is also notable. It examines the consequences of human exhaustion and compassion fatigue. Mentions of the news cycle and allusions to global political issues are paired with lines like "If only I had the power to bring the world some peace." While the piece touches on general points of contention, it's also a personal plea for a break amid constant struggle and adversity.

"Once Upon a Time" is emblematic of the collection's style, which employs concise writing and visceral subject matters:

*You were once so gentle to the touch
Now I really hate you so much
You used to buy me lovely things
Would tug at my heart strings*

As with many poems in the collection, lines are coupled together so that the last words rhyme. This simple scheme makes for easy reading, watering down emotional and often difficult content. While rhymes are sometimes redundant, content remains at once raw and approachable.

The book's packaging takes away from the overall aesthetic and undermines the work, with occasional stock photos laid over the text.

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LILLIAN BROWN (January 16, 2018)

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