Clarion Review

Poetry

Messages from the Heart: There Is Something Here For Everyone
Ramona Saunders
CreateSpace
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Three Stars (out of Five)

A relationship changes over time. There is love, lust, heartbreak, confusion, and much more linked to romance. Ramona Saunders's poetry collection, *Messages from the Heart*, focuses on chronicling the many twists and turns of a relationship: the meeting and longing, the break-ups and turmoil, the rekindled spark, and so on. Love unites people of all ages and backgrounds, and this collection will speak to people who have love or have lost it.

Emotional honesty is a badge of honor for each of the poems in Saunders's collection. The speakers are not afraid to say that they love or miss someone. This honesty is something that will resonate with readers of all ages and backgrounds. When a speaker talks about seeing a love interest "at the top of the stairwell," readers can't help but envision the moment when they saw their own love for the first time.

Many poems are unique because of the speaker's voice. In "What Happened to Me," the voice is specific and hurting. The poem's speaker talks about "hurting for money" and "sleeping under a tree." These details create a vivid picture of someone who is struggling to explain "what happened to him." The clipped dialect and interesting syntax make this speaker seem real and close, even if the reader isn't sure what this person looks like.

Saunders includes some important messages in this piece. The final piece in the collection ends with a simple yet true statement: "This is me." Here, the speaker speaks of her flaws and her joys and how you "have to take me as I am." This unapologetic statement asks for a love that moves past presentation. Instead of changing one's partner, the speaker asks for love that accepts, enjoys, and understands all lines and shadows of the heart.

Romance often involves cycles. Thus, this collection involves much repetition. Though the poems are emotionally interesting, the repetition sometimes slows the collection down because there are so few real-life scenarios or details. Similarly, though the ideas in the

collection are consistent, there are a few blips when it comes to grammar. Important words like prey and pray are confused within the same poem, which, in turn, dilutes the power of the piece.

This collection explores the complicated matters of romance. People come together, break apart, pine for one another, and are sometimes reunited. Though loud at times, the collection's poems are open and pure, bluntly asking for the return of love, burning over spurned romance, and celebrating the light in a lover's eyes or quiet moments in a café. There is little hidden here: the emotions and pleas are clear as day. These poems are messages from a heart looking to mend and bloom.

Lisa Bower