

Missing Persons: A Life of Unexpected Influences

Bruce Piasecki

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Missing Persons is more than a memoir; it is wonderful entertainment and a celebration of memory.

Bruce Piasecki, author of the memoir *Missing Persons: A Life of Unexpected Influences*, leaves the impression that he is not a person who does life exactly according to the rules. He is a professor, poet, and business consultant who wrote his doctoral thesis at Cornell on Walt Whitman. Before writing this memoir, Piasecki wrote ten books on business policy. He acknowledges that he began writing this life story nearly twenty years ago. Like his life, it has been a work in progress.

His writing clearly reflects the talents of a man who is in love with words and writing. His sentences flow easily, and he has an ability to capture a moment and precisely convey its intensity. Describing a significant moment of intimacy with his wife, he writes: "He gently touched her eyebrows, pushing the hairs in the wrong direction, as he had done a thousand times. But this time, he could smell the long, thick Sicilian hair more clearly and more sharply than ever." He takes a moment that may have happened before and makes it a unique and powerful symbol.

Piasecki has also laid out his memoir in a very readable format. The book is organized into three sections: his early life, the middle years, and the future. It isn't every writer who is able to extend a memoir out into the future. But Piasecki handles this rather nimbly.

The author also has broken down the book into short vignettes, each easy to read in a short period. One can either consume the book slowly, savoring each vignette, or devour several scenes in a sitting. Either way, the book is fun to read.

Piasecki has chosen to refer to himself in the third person throughout the book. This style detracts from the sincerity of the story.

Piasecki may have written *Missing Persons* for any number of reasons. His father died when the author was only three, and this memoir was written, at least in part, to sort out the pain and the remembered events flowing from that trauma. But *Missing Persons* is more. It is wonderful entertainment and a celebration of memory. Piasecki says about his book, "But mostly it is about the power of memory—an art form that is accessible to us all." Thus, an extraordinary man connects with everyone.

JOHN SENGER (April 2, 2015)

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