

My Unsung Soul: Six Collections of Poetry and Prose

Derrick DerRon Holloway

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With its expansive takes on melancholia and romance, My Unsung Soul is a soulful and vivacious collection of poetry.

Poet Derrick DerRon Holloway embarks on an inward journey through his book *My Unsung Soul*, traveling a lengthy expanse of memories, nostalgia, and a sinner's regret.

Confessional and deeply personal, this collection of verse explores love, warfare, life, sorrow, and nostalgia, and includes a testimony of the speaker's past sins, including a consuming addiction to "She." Together, the poems represent a heartfelt quest for understanding and redemption, while also dealing with big-picture matters like "love, loss and loneliness."

Formats include free verse, haiku, and prose poetry that sometimes stretches on for pages. Poems are packed with biographical details, such as that the narrator wears his Sunday best to church, shares a twin bed with his brothers during childhood, and has trust issues in his adult relationships. He is captured missing a significant other's perfume that lingers in a certain room, and feeling the slow-motion hopelessness of watching sand dunes erode away.

Poems frequently deploy repetition as a rhetorical device. The meter is often rhythmic. Traditional rhyme schemes are also used, but are generally less effective, if at times they are addictive enough to call to mind pop songs. Internal rhymes are more successful, such as "faces and places I hadn't seen."

The poems' symbolism veers into clichés: "the blood I bleed, the air I breathe." Not all of them seem inspired. Bits of the work's imagery are evocative, as with "sun-beaten sand," "sea-sank ships," and "wildfire upon fields."

Alliteration and assonance are both strong points, and the book's more singsong, lyrical poems burst with musicality. When language is concrete and specific, as with a poem that waxes rhapsodic about "citronella torches and candles in cans / Fish Fry Fridays and fruit stands," it holds attention.

My Unsung Soul showcases an intuitive grasp of the stirring power of figurative language. The book's biblical allusions are more heavy-handed, if they do maintain a sense of sincerity.

The poet's perspective comes through throughout, and he is sympathetic as he expresses regret over various indiscretions. The book's perspectives on love and relationships are fresh, particularly in poems like "A Drug Named She," "Break the Chains," "Sorrow's But for a Moment," and "Thinking of You."

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JOSEPH S. PETE (February 14, 2018)

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