

Poems for the Young at Heart: Love, Infatuation, Patriotism, Inspiration, and Friendship

Samuel Lombardo

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With an honest tone and real heart, Lombardo tackles the topic of love in his new collection of poetry.

There are shelves and shelves of love poems in libraries around the world. In truth, it's the most complex topic to write about today, since it's been covered so extensively. Yet, Samuel Lombardo, retired military professional, dares to tackle it in his new collection, *Poems for the Young at Heart*. As the cover indicates, the collection deals with "love, infatuation, patriotism, inspiration, and friendship." In over sixty-seven pages, he pours his heart out over all these topics, bringing his feelings front and center, line after line.

Lombardo wastes no time. The first poem, "Conversation with Love"—"Love, you are so beautiful"—shows his romantic side. He follows with his platonic feelings for his friends in "To My Friend Sophia," stating in clear language how he feels about the love of those closest to him: "But I thank God every minute / For having you as my friend."

Toward the collection's end, Lombardo takes on more controversial topics of government criticism and respect for veterans, directly addressed and summed up in "Give Me Back My America": "I feel we are slipping into socialism / Where everyone's the same / And most of us will lose our freedoms / And our leaders have no shame."

As the aforementioned examples show, the collection doesn't utilize a contemporary style; instead the verse rhymes throughout. This traditional style, coupled with very familiar themes about love and romance, such as in "Separation But in Love"—"Love, oh love, why did you hit my heart / When you well knew / That we would be apart?"—makes the poems come off like greeting-card lines or political statements.

Lines in several poems—i.e. "I went to Alibies last night"; "It took me awhile to leave Carlisle"—indicate the environments the writer's ideas come from, such as bars, hangouts, and highway travels. This material whets the appetite when read aloud; including additional information about such places and the atmosphere they create in the writer's mind, along with exploring a more experimental writing style, could reveal an increasingly complex, exciting poetry that examines the topics Lombardo obviously cares about.

There's no question that Lombardo writes like a man whose heart is seized by love, loss, and longing, and true sincerity about his work carries over from poem to poem. Though it's lacking in imagination, *Poems for the Young at Heart* has real heart behind it.

JAMES BURT (April 22, 2014)

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