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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ POETRY

Reflections of Life

Craig Piercy
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New Zealand native Craig Piercy has produced over 300 poems since 2004, when he began writing with no prior experience or training. Piercy is clearly a good-hearted, loving, self-aware person; his intentions here are noble and his themes are uplifting and positive. He encourages his readers to look within their own hearts for answers and directions, to savor moments of joy, and to openly express their affection for their loved ones. Unfortunately, he does so in language that is juvenile and clichéd. Readers could be forgiven for thinking that these verses are parodies of bad poetry, like the old “Deep Thoughts by Jack Handey” sketches from Saturday Night Live.

For example, in “Everyday Thoughts,” he writes: “Look around, smile at someone / Yes, go on, make your day / One smile can mean so much / Can bring you back into the bunch.”

The verses are completely lacking in structure, yet they can’t be considered vers libre either, since they lack specificity of imagery and creativity of word selection. “Choices” opens with these lines: “Some are easy, some are hard / You have to make them! / Even if you don’t want to / Feel like a fool, should bugger off to the pool // Choices, split decisions, make the right one, great! / Make the wrong one, oh, what a mistake.”

Piercy’s punctuation is entirely random, as are his rhythms and rhymes. Consider this excerpt from “Direction”: “Looking for direction, with protection / It’s just like an infection // Life, full of ups and downs / sometimes I feel like a clown / Direction, come here, go there / Where? / I need direction almost as much as affection.”

The subtitle of this volume is “My Epiphany,” though readers are never subjected to anexplanation of the big life realization that led this writer to publish his intimate thoughts in verse form. Writing and journaling are time-honored ways for people to express their personal emotions and to come to deeper understanding of the events in their lives. It’s admirable that Piercy is exploring poetry in this way, but he would be well advised to study the mechanics and art of poetry before publishing again.

KAREN MCCARTHY (July 1, 2010)

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