

Seizing the Poem in the Wonder of the Now

Roger Mahaney

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Too often spiritual poetry is so much card sentiment and stale repetition of religious dogma with little original thought or feeling. Poet Roger R. Mahaney rips away this curtain of ennui in his vibrant work *Seizing the Poem in the Wonder of the Now*. His poetry is practical playful sometimes cynical frequently transcendent always fascinating. The language and worldview are not always pretty but they are often beautiful. Be warned: at times his fierce honesty lapses into less than polite wording.

In this work Mahaney explores the problem of how to hold on to one's deeply held beliefs while living in a world that's often less than spiritual. He's is not afraid to reach into the world of reality snatch something out and show it for the precious thing it is while at the same time reminding the reader that there might be something more on the offer.

Impassioned sincere sometimes blunt ("just don't pretend orgasm is salvation") the poet has captured the spirit of Christianity and brings a sense of freshness and beauty to the joy (and difficulties) of his love affair with God. In "4 A.M." the poet describes pushing away his loneliness and lust in the middle of the night and clinging to God instead. He wonders how he wound up alone and unmarried at forty-four. Single forty-somethings will identify with his isolation his hopes for the future and his belief that God has not abandoned him in his solitude.

Mahaney's spiritual call to arms is a whisper rather than a rant using logic and moving persuasion: "The Bible calls you gently to open and read / The great writers spend their energy in futility / Only 1 out of 300 read at all / and 1 in five are in prison." In "Cheap Drugs (That Cost a Lot)" Mahaney speaks eloquently of the mental health industry and the over-prescription of medications to deal with mental health issues: "The silent torment of the disease is / Far more of a comfort than the fake help."

In *Seizing the Poem in the Wonder of the Now* God is a living force that speaks to the individual. The author blends a streetwise toughness with human vulnerability and compassion for his fellow travelers on the road of life. Mahaney speaks directly to the heart.

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