Clarion Review

Poetry

The Book of Poems and Conversational Triggers
Llewellyn George
Trafford
978-1-4669-3806-9
Three Stars (out of Five)

It takes something pretty unusual to make a poetry book stand out on the basis of its format, but Llewellyn George has risen to the challenge. *The Book of Poems and Conversational Triggers* intermingles George's poems with lists of questions and statements meant to prompt discussion.

Llewellyn George was born in the US Virgin Islands, and his friendly, easygoing nature permeates both his poetry and the conversational triggers. George's poems can be clunky, with doggedly simplistic similes and metaphors, such as, "Like a magnet, to the hands of others you will be attracted" and "Your kindness will be digested in the stomach of many." But George wears his heart on his sleeve, and what the poetry might lack in grace is somewhat counterbalanced by earnestness and passion. He writes loving paeans to his mother, grandmother, and other important people in his life, and he seems to relish romance, a common subject for his poems.

George describes himself as having an expressive, outgoing personality, and while that might be considered a detriment for some types of modern poetry, which tend toward the solitary and introspective, it can only be an asset when considering possible ways to spark a conversation.

The conversational triggers are presented in lists of ten, and while some of these are innocuous ("Have you ever been bird-watching?" and "What type of books do you enjoy reading?"), others could perhaps be more provocative than desired ("The master of deception will be on TV tonight."). Others might just get the speaker detained, or at least harshly rebuked, depending on the conversational partner ("Security around here is awfully tight." and "The gray in your hair is so appealing to my eyes!").

As strange as some of the conversational triggers may be, they do provoke interaction in a different way than other likeminded books like Gregory Stock's *Book of Questions*, which

often aspire to deep, difficult, philosophical queries, or seem designed by psychologists to arrive at a personality profile. George's questions are much less calculated. Asking them feels like channeling the spirit of a well-intentioned person, with no agenda, who doesn't shy away from saying what is on his mind.

It might not amount to greatness when considered strictly as literature, but Llewellyn George's zest for life comes through clearly in these pages. *The Book of Poems and Conversational Triggers* is definitely enjoyable, and readers looking for something to get people talking at their next cocktail party will find it a worthy read.

Peter Dabbene