



The Everywhere Oracle: A Guided Journey through Poetry for an Ensouled World

Caryl Ann Casbon

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Those looking for a fresh way to approach self-help would do well to engage with this volume.

The Everywhere Oracle, by Caryl Ann Casbon, is a unique offering that combines poetry with exploratory questions intended as a guide to personal understandings of the pieces within. Also included are suggestions for how to conduct a group session or circle that employs Casbon's poetry as a means of supporting others on their spiritual paths.

Casbon's poems are clear and direct with lines laced with images of the natural world. The herd of female elk in "Wintering Through on the Seventh Hole" and the frogs croaking in "Summer's Time Keepers" are memorable, as are the haunting—but somehow also inspiring—moments that illuminate life on the prairies of Saskatchewan.

What the pieces collected here do best, however, is open doors of exploration. Casbon's subject matter—and the language she addresses it in—is easily relatable, with little that is too complex or difficult to comprehend. And that's the intent: for poems about change, about aging, about the nature of being, about soul and spirit to lead others to their own deeply held feelings about these same things.

There are questions at the book's end for each poem; individuals or groups working with the volume are asked to reflect on their answers and then journal their responses. One question following the piece "Crossroads of the Emergent Self," for example, reads, "When you read this poem, does a 'shape shifting' time come to mind from your own life?" Casbon gets even more specific, with questions that ask about clearing out the garage, about the holidays, about the body.

These specifics, however, often become metaphor. Being asked to consider the clutter in the garage is also to be prompted to wonder about what we hold onto within ourselves that we could let go of. Similarly, "slip[ping] into warm waters" leads to a question about cleansing and purifying our inner lives. These accompanying questions—and the self-knowledge they inspire—greatly enrich the experience of Casbon's poetry.

The Everywhere Oracle's uniqueness as a book of both poetry and spiritual guidance is most certainly its greatest appeal. Those looking for a fresh way to approach self-help would do well to engage with this volume, as would any group or circle working to manifest soulfulness in the modern world.

MARGARET FEDDER (November 3, 2015)

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