

The Geometry of Freedom

Henry Cunningham

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In Henry Cunningham's poetry collection *The Geometry of Freedom*, free verse becomes the vehicle for addressing issues of the self, like fulfilling one's wishes and desires, as well as of the outer world, such as environmental stewardship.

Ideas of letting go of fear, hurt, and destructive thinking thread throughout the collection. So, too, is there a focus on forgiving oneself any wrongs, big or small, and living life to the fullest, bringing dreams into the realm of the real. These are joyful concepts, presented through persuasive, encouraging lines of poetry. Titles run toward the long end; some are as lengthy as seven pages. The poet's background as a scientist also comes through, with thrilling hints toward quantum physics and metaphysics:

*Every dimension and every layer of being
just needs a couple steps back
to see it's still part of the same everywhere that is Here!*

While many of the poems distinctly and broadly address big philosophical, social, or spiritual issues, a few poems in the collection's middle dip into more personal subjects. Both "A Little Holiday Poem" and "Birthday Poem" are addressed to a particular recipient and demonstrate a lot of affection and love.

Language throughout is energetic. Repeated forms, including imperative phrasing, help in maintaining that energy. There is also verve to opening words that repeat: "For absolving any fears of similarity, / For dissolving illusions of peculiarity, / For the odd and normal and their impossible difference." Such repetition drives home the concepts explored, whether they involve an admonishment to live a brave life or are musings about the dangers of boredom.

What unites the collection is its overarching encouragement to move forward and exist with no regrets, if to do so with care. Each piece utilizes a different hook or perspective to arrive at those suggestions. There is a joyfulness in these words, a positive outlook that perhaps can even be interpreted as mystical in its message.

Many of these complex poems may require more than one reading to impart their full meaning. Because they are often quite dense, they can't be read quickly or casually. Still, there is a lot of food for thought here, and there is room to approach poems on a random basis to derive daily inspiration.

This collection sets a positive and meaningful tone, and it will appeal to those who appreciate big-picture themes and thoughtful writing. *The Geometry of Freedom* is a bold, lyrical collection that contains a nuanced intelligence.

OLIVIA BOLER (July 27, 2016)

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