

This Atmosphere of Love

Franklin Bass Jr.

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This deeply personal poetry collection is a tender homage to a lady deemed worth celebrating.

Franklin Bass Jr.'s sweet and heartfelt poetry collection, *This Atmosphere of Love*, is dedicated to his "special lady" and is filled with pieces about relationships and meditations on romance.

The book opens with "Softness Interlude" and "Flowers All Over the Place," poems that describe the muse-lover's sensitivity, beauty, and style: "So when I daydream or, see your pretty face, / I see and feel, flowers all over the place." All rhymed couplets, the poems follow a consistent pattern that catches the ear.

However, the thirty-three poems' structures and meters do not change. The form becomes repetitive, and without the white space between the pieces or the large title headings, it would be difficult to differentiate one from another. Without a table of contents, the book is also difficult to navigate.

Using everyday language instead of frills and flounces—"I am your Champion, I love you tremendously," one poem says, while another declares, "When I go into the candy store, that's where I'll spend my money, / On my beautiful lady, because she's Sweet as Honey"—the lines are frank and conversational when it comes to feelings. They are oddly punctuated, and there is little wordplay in these lines, which have a greeting-card feel: moving, but not complex.

Stock photos of marriage symbols, happy couples, sushi, and flowers punctuate the poems, giving the book the feeling of a personalized coffee table book or special wedding album. Much of the content is so intimate that it feels inappropriate to read, as though the audience is pawing through a stranger's diary.

Issues of taste push past the book's sentimentality. Here, not all women are presented as equally deserving, and lesser partners, uncharitably described as "females" instead of "ladies" or "women," are not celebrated. Negative comments in call-out poems dampen the sweet effect of the collection more generally. The harsh "Vacancy" directly contrasts a desired partner's characteristics with those that turn him off: "If there is a female out there, who is willing to take up / residency in my heart / Without playing games that some of them start."

Having found what he's looking for, the poet settles into his subject with relish. The poems are dated from 2009 to 2012, and many of them are dedicated to "Charlotte," whose particular significance is not further explained.

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