

Unveiled - My Story

Shanon Jacobs

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Despite adversity, poet Shanon Jacobs used spirituality to persevere.

The image on the cover of *Unveiled* is ambiguous, but it's fitting for this memoir in verse. Depending on one's vantage point, the butterfly surrounded by shades of bluish green might be landing or on the verge of taking flight. Though today she is accomplished, well-educated, and living in South Africa, Shanon Jacobs's experiences growing up could have easily grounded her. Unrequited love, deceit, loss, disappointment, and betrayal are often a part of developing into young adulthood, but Jacobs seems to have been perpetually rocked by emotional hardship, all while being determined to soar. She documents her experiences in poetry in this encouraging memoir.

The poems are made up of rhymes that are typically forced and often distracting: "I cannot express how I feel / All I know, my heart you did steal / To see you is my weekly meal." It is the faith-based theme and tone of the poetry that resonates. While the speaker is holding on to God, everyone slips away: lovers, best friends, acquaintances, and, devastatingly, her father. Lines that express the stages of grief experienced after her father's death are heartrending: "I don't know how Christmas will be without you / All I know it will be a hard and sad day to get through."

Some poems are dated, spanning 2011 to 2014, while others include a prose statement designed to offer context, such as the one in "Unexplained—Battle Between Good and Evil": "I was so low. I thought how and why could this happen to me." The speaker goes on to contemplate forgiving human manipulation and treachery. A few of the poems include a Bible passage in bold, though it is unclear how a reader might interpret its inclusion. For example, in "Unexplained—Going Through Hell," on the surface, the speaker's growing sense of betrayal ("It's all about men and money / Seriously this is not funny") does not seem to relate to Hebrews 13:6, a verse about courage and faith.

The second to last poem, "Encouraging Poem to Me, Myself, and I," suggests hope and hints at life yet to be lived, as the final words read, "To be continued." Through all of the difficulty, Jacobs learns valuable lessons about coping with pain, lessons she wishes to impart with each verse: "Be content with your storyline / God created you just fine." Thus, those who have experienced grief and rejection can benefit from reading *Unveiled* and crafting a few rhyming couplets of their own.

KAUVONIA HINTON (June 30, 2014)

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