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Altadena Poetry Review: Anthology 2015

Edited by Thelma T. Reyna

Golden Foothills Press

Reviewed by Carol Davala

*"I think that sometimes
even in this frightening world
trusting is a good thing"*

The essence of this all-inclusive poetry collection is harmoniously rooted in a much loved community project supported by the Friends of the Altadena Library. Originally started as a small compilation from 12 poets back in 2003, the formerly titled "Poetry and Cookies" has ultimately grown into a full-fledged publication. Selections for this anthology were narrowed to 105 poems, submitted by 60 poets throughout the greater Los Angeles area. Contributors with backgrounds spanning fields in art, music, education, and business seem as varied as the poems themselves. Among these individuals are three poets laureate and several award winners.

This well-rounded book showcases work representing a broad spectrum of poetic style and subject matter, and it includes details indicative of spanning generations, cultural diversity, and a special blend of topical life experiences. From traditional formats to free-flowing verse, rhyming acrostics, elemental haiku and tankas, the poetic voices illuminate childhood memories, observe modern technology, and reflect on nature for both its beauty and consequences. We find humor in Beth Baird's "Ode To A Temporary Relationship" when realizing the connection is to a cell phone, then sense the stark contrast in "Identity," as Gerda Govine Ituarte struggles with a word to define the loss of a child. These are reflective pieces, where emotions rise to the surface for a reader's contemplation. In "Ojus, Florida: 1945 - That Day," poet Nancy Lind pulls the audience directly into that time and place to share a child's joy in seeing a beloved brother return home from war.

Whether you are new to the world of poetry or a connoisseur of this versatile form of artistic expression, Reyna's well-edited, engaging volume offers a rewarding and enriching encounter. For those drawn to encapsulated revelations from a group of talented and gifted writers, the takeaway from such pocket-size reflections is grand.

*****RECOMMENDED** by the US Review***

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