

Surviving the Sorrow: Poems of Hope and Healing

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Surviving the Sorrow

Ann Kestner

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Best Therapy

You are my
favorite frivolous expense of the heart.
You that giggles my cold blood warm again.
You that dances in the storm drain of my sorrows
and rides along my harsh history as if it were
an exciting rollercoaster in what you tease
to be the amusement park of my family.

Your laughter is a luxury to me.
Your entertaining, twisting way of seeing
is the best of all the best therapies.
At the Gates

We long for some place in the distance.
We push forward, push past, and pull back
while picking barbed wire splinters from our sides.

There's a gate at the edge of delight and
we're on the wrong side.

You talk of the taste of good wine
while we pry chains off of our ankles
and I think of how, for once,
it would be nice to have something
I could swallow.

Sometimes, I swear, I see a halo
over your head, when you're talking of
beautiful things and in the same sentence
you say you and me.

It's these little things that we need.
How we trade hope for hope and feed
each other's dreams. We love, you and me,
God, and the chance to see the sea. We love
in the time in-between.

No longer yesterday, not yet tomorrow,
we juggle past, present, and possibility.

We pray for grace but don't care if we look
like fools. We know better than to believe
in what other people think of you and me.

And every day we push a little harder, look
a little farther and become a little stronger.
We have chosen not to surrender, not to
settle for less than love and a little laughter.

We are artists at the art of life
painting our own portraits and
pictures of blue skies using

the colors we found fragmented
out of raindrops.

We live in a world that prides itself
on disguise, meanwhile we peel costumes
off, layer by layer, trying to discover
the truth and how to let it show through.

We try to be true to ourselves, to each other,
to who we are and who we will be.

We know where we've been and
we know where we are going.
And we love the road in-between.
We hunt out others like us.
We share progress.

And we know
that when we get to the gate of delight
it will open.

And we are not going in.
We are letting it out.
If Only

Often, it is said,
we are of those among the
shadows,

day-born creatures traveling
in the darkness.

But that cannot be us.
We are not momentary,
moody.

We are fixed in this
night.

Shadows move too quick
for us. We do not run along
with them like the dial of a
clock, like the men that trot
with umbrellas through the
rain, carefully avoiding
the collected puddles.

We sit in the blank
darkness, stationary at the
bottom of a flooded city.

If only there were
shadows here, we would
chase them.

Thoughts Behind Closed Lids

You strike a match on my palm—open.

Spark a memory—simplicity, we had, once.

Young—you fell out of the tree, the knot

still on your head. I keep scars, like a

scrap book. Beads on a string—diary.

Dandy Lions lost yellow—longed for the

wind. We caught a twister instead—landed

stranded on the stump of a thousand year

tree. I count the rings. One for each of

the dry leaves—dirt, for dead evergreens.

And the future, they said, was ours.

Into the World *

Ann Kestner delivers another powerful collection of poems fueled with genuine emotion and relatable human experience. Her words cradle without coddling. She captures the struggle for survival against sorrows in a voice uniquely her own yet relatable to all. The poems walk into suffering but never so deep as to make the reader drown.

Throughout the book the words offer a balance of confronting the difficulties of our internal and external battles while simultaneously offering a sense of hope in a callous world of chaos. In the end, *Surviving the Sorrow*, redefines success and healing by acknowledging the need to accept there will never be anyone that achieves perfection.

The book embraces the joy of comfort during times of trouble. It illustrates how our most sincere joy comes from the companionship of friends during our darkest and most troubling times and it helps readers recognize the happiness hidden within their own times of sorrow.

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