
HUCK'S PICKS

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YOU DON'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU SEE

But if you try sometimes . . .

Michael Savard's "What Do You See" is an interesting combination of poetry and prose, both illuminated by a stark dualism of altruism and low expectations. His poems simultaneously describe pleasant memories of a first kiss, for example, that suddenly devolve into dark recollections of betrayal. What follows is an attempt to reconcile the two, which leads to the poem's speaker "fall[ing] in love with the world's sadness."

He closes with a brief meditation on this country's founding and the importance of a definite moral order that, it is hoped, will bring us all peace and freedom from fear.

A TURTLE CAN STILL WIN THE RACE

As we all know, comic strips are not exclusively for kids, and the adventures of **Pushon Turtle**, the creation of **Mike Evans**, can be read on several levels. On the most obvious, Pushon is a shy little fellow who rarely pokes his head out of his shell because he's convinced that he's isolated in the world. He has no friends and has given up hope of ever finding one. That is, until one day an uninvited guest, Jus' abird, lands on his shell with persistent knocking until Pushon summons the courage to talk to him.

They discover commonalities, enjoy the pond, and promise to meet there the next day. It's a sweet story for a child but also a reminder to adult readers that pulling ourselves out of our self-imposed shells is necessary to confront the world we live in and to interact with the people in it. Along the way, we just might discover, as Pushon Turtle does, that friends are a very pleasant addition.

EMBRACING THE RIDDLE

"The Beautiful Enigma" by **Robert Nicholas** is another study in dichotomies. Nicholas divides his work into three sections, Truth, The Delusion, and The Deception, this structure emphasizing the overarching theme of balance in life's scheme of rewards and punishments. All meted out by an indifferent universe. With lines such as "May came with wind at her wings/Gliding through spring," he channels the Romantic poet Percy Shelley, who also remarked on life's vicissitudes, often without the calm detachment offered by Nicholas.

Poems such as "The Dark Side of Love," "Painful Pleasure," and "Everything Comes Back Around" illustrate this cyclic nature of our brief dance on the planet. I couldn't help smiling at that last example, bringing back, as it did, memories of that old jailhouse adage, "What goes around comes around." Nicholas doesn't use his poetry to threaten but instead reminds us that what we do and say has repercussions we cannot always foresee in the moment.

This is a provocative and evocative collection of poems that will have the reader nodding in thoughtful agreement and perhaps wondering why--or if-- life is the way Nicholas describes it.



Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison.

Henry David Thoreau