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Pathways: Walking Through Creation

Brenda M. Asterino

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Reviewed by Amy Lignor for Reader Views (12/2021)

I keep a journal. No, I don't expect you to gasp in awe at that statement. Many people keep journals or diaries or perhaps, like my mother used to, carry around those colorful memo pads so you can tear one off at a moment's notice to write down that "sudden thought" you don't want to forget. I used to think that was silly; I mean... who could forget a thought just walking from the kitchen to the living room? Well, after I had my own yipping, yapping (lovely) child at my heels all the time, I suddenly realized "Mom's way" made complete sense.

This particular author was apparently keeping her own thoughts and emotions in a book during the time of the early pandemic, when the globe suddenly found out about all of humankind's flaws, such as, inequity, racism and all of those "issues" people fought for and died for throughout history so that we would 'all get along.' In addition, by utilizing her own needs, outlooks, and personal life events, she creates poems that really hit you right between the eyes. My agreement with her honest words comes from the fact that she basically shows one of the biggest necessities for us as a people is to work for, attain, and then celebrate a complete overhaul of our cultural attitude.

On a deeply personal level, Brenda Asterino shares the fact that, as a grandmother, she wants nothing more than for her own grandchildren to have a real chance in this world without peoples' negativity—whether born with it or learned from other generations—limiting their chances. Through her ability to watch the world operate on a daily basis, Asterino is able to show that the treatment of others is a key issue in the state of humanity, the world, and whether or not we'll end up shooting ourselves in the foot before all is said and done.

Some of the poems are easy. They are a walk down the road with Asterino as she points out everyday things and transitions them to mean something else. My personal favorite in this category is Merry-go-round: "...Riding higher to the sky. Where are you going? Where am I? Am I fast or are you slow? You all glide away the higher I go. Merry go high, merry go low." This powerful prose told in a lovely, easy way goes on to say: "Does his smile go up or down? Can't always tell on the merry-go-round. I like the horse with the wild eye. Too far to touch. Watch your life pass you by..." And: "If it goes up will you forget who was there? The cycle never stops, no time to compare."

The poem has more words, but I am picking out the excerpts that hit me personally between the eyes. Old friends, giving up dreams out of fear, or not reaching out to that wild-eyed one because I didn't have enough courage; the moment passed me by. This one poem is a part of the author's mighty opus that reached out to me at the right time.

But as the pages fly and new lessons are learned, there are some told in a bolder fashion that everyone needs to read and, more importantly, listen to. Although it's hard to pull out one notable piece from the substantial pile, 'Fear' is a great example. Some of the lines that will hit you: "Controlling fear through culture makes profit. Controlling fear through politics makes war."

You will not be disappointed by this treasure trove of wise words. In fact, "Pathways" is insightful, challenging, and shows a way we can all persevere simply by doing it together. Brenda Asterino gets a definite "5-Stars" from me!