

Book review: Remembering Father by Lloyd Howell

Robert Selle
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This book is about love, and is the author's expression of gratitude for his mentor, the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Having experienced love's redemptive and transformative qualities through that relationship, it is the author's hope that the reader of this work will be similarly renewed and uplifted – even propelled to seek its source – the Creator. The poems herein highlight various moments in the author's journey and are a celebration of love and life not unlike that of the Sufi poet Rumi and the many poems generated by his love for his teacher, Shams of Tabriz. Thus, the book's appeal is universal, since we all seek or have experienced to one degree or another that sort of love and nurturing. In fact, humanity presently screams out for love, forgiveness and healing. May we all find our way.

I recently came across a truly delightful volume of poetry that really pulled at my heartstrings and even occasionally tickled my sense of humor. Moreover it was full of spiritual provocation and nutrition. Generally speaking, I've found a lot of poetry these days to be really tiresome. The poets selfishly put the reader through the exercise of chasing a "deep," elusive meaning in their self-consciously ambiguous and intellectually egoistic poetic musings. But if you're into truly good poetry—as well as spirituality—Lloyd Howell's work in "Remembering Father: A Poetic Tribute to the Rev. Sun Myung Moon" is a breath of fresh air.

The poems track the spiritual journey of a young man who ultimately joined a small religious group in his quest to better understand the universe and cultivate a deeper relationship with God. The works are divided into a handful of his pre-Unification Church poems, a group of verses that sprang from his life in the church "family," and then a body of poems after Moon passed away in 2012 at age 92. Moon was referred to as "Father" by church members—thus the title of Howell's book.

I found that the sentiments and poetic insights in "Remembering Father" go beyond the limits of denomination and doctrine. They are universal to all of us as a human family. He touches on everything from our yearning for God, to earthy references to husband-wife love, to pathos over the paucity of love in his birth family, to tenderness and reverence toward a spiritual mentor and guide, which is what Moon and the Sufi poet Rumi are for Howell.

Are you hungry? Then let these poems feed your spirit as they did mine.

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