



GRAY TECHNOLOGIES PRESS

The Hounds of Love

by Mark Allen Gray

Poetry • 96 pages

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Reviews of This Book

The Hounds of Love is a compilation of fifty-eight of Mark Allen Gray's expertly sculpted free verse poems that explore the many facets of love. Written over a span of twenty-seven years, these poems candidly portray the diverse emotions ignited by love and intimately felt by the poet. Gray states that in case the readers have experienced any of these feelings, they will understand that love "is free and it is loose and it is dogged by all of us, relentlessly. Like a pack of hounds on a hunt, it is a game, with one prize, and one loser."

The beginning of every section in this volume is graphically represented by a ring or more, each comprising three circles to symbolize birth, life, and death. The first section contains one ring to portray love discovered, the second and third sections add a ring at each stage to depict love experienced, and love lost, respectively. In the final section, the three rings overlap like Venn diagrams to form the shape of a heart, illustrating that love is an endless cycle of discovery, experience, and loss.

The dramatis personae for Gray's story include the poet, his love and his friend. His journey begins with birth, triggering the myriad ways of discovering various forms of love throughout life: platonic, romantic, sexual, and spiritual. The poem "Where is the Love" reveals "That we can find love / Wherever we find humanity." In this sequence of events, experience comes after discovery: "A smile /A touch... /A connection /A hug...". For, "The world is truly amazing to experience," but there are moments preceding a storm when "I fear / For My Self / For My Love / For My friend." Experience is subsequently followed by the trauma of loss: "Love turned to tragedy...Praying for our recovery." The cycle ends with strong determination to overcome loss: "And in my loss, I have won / And in my resolve, I will heal."

The reader can truly feel all the emotions depicted in this poignant collection of succinctly and lucidly written poems, from the wondrous joys of discovering love and romance to the pain of loss, along with the associated despondency, anger, and heartbreak.

— *BookWire Review, May 18, 2005*

Overall, I like the authenticity of the poetry; it seems to come from real experiences and the feelings that they evoke. This is the foundation to all really good poetry. The best poems are those that are concrete. In particular, "Where is the Love?" and "She Left Me" have images that a reader can grab onto and rhythms that get into the "body" of the reader--not just the mind.

— *Dr. Brad Hollingshead*



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Mark Allen Gray is an important new voice in the poetry genre. His book, *The Hounds of Love*, captured my interest from the first poem to the last. The raw emotion evinced in his narrative is at times painful, yet always truthful, for lost love is a universal hurt. On the flip side, his sensitive, gentle portrayal of love found gives hope to us all that goodness will ultimately prevail. A searing, insightful read.

— *Vivian Copeland*

I found the book to be a good chronicle of life. It is something to cause reflection. Whether the reader relates to a certain passage or not, it makes him think of his own experiences in the manner you portray life in your passages. Also, I found enough mystery from one passage to another to keep me interested in continuing to the next. I think that is the secret to good writing. The stages of love I think are well defined, however, I would like to see more passages in the last one on Resolve.

— *Mark Saad*

I read your book in one sitting and then re-read some parts again. I was utterly transported by the authenticity and artistry of your work. Even though each poem is unique in terms of the mood, shades of color, sounds and feelings it evokes, altogether they make a very meaningful whole. The shifts in emotions come through very powerfully by the various rhythms of the free verse, by the anaphora, and the alliterations which create a sense of immediacy. Although Love with all its twists and turns and with all the multiplicity of thoughts and feeling that accompany it is the theme that connects the poems, reading them on a fall day's afternoon as the light was gradually fading, brought into my mind universal themes of life, death and regeneration, of our total human vulnerability in this vast universe, and our deep-seated need for human connectedness to keep us from falling into the abyss.

— *Miriam Adelstein*

I will say I was interested throughout and was disappointed when I reached the end (because I wanted to read more!). One thing did stick out at me and scares the hell out of me: "It is a tragic realization that love is never fully experienced without discovery and loss."

— *Michael Antinucci*

I'm impressed with how deeply personal your work is. That takes a lot of courage to face yourself so completely. I like the grouping of the sections. I do have a favorite. Rocket Man does a nice job of capturing childhood, mixing playfulness with emerging puberty. The closing line is fun!

— *Don Pound*

Very enjoyable! The first half of the book was nice. At first glance I enjoyed some poems better than others but definitely want to reread and think about all of them some more. Towards the end of Chapter 2 and into Chapter 3 when the poems started getting more personal, it became a bit uncomfortable to read, but at the same time I became gripped by the narrative and story aspects of the verses. By the time I got to the end of the poem "My Love" I had tears in my eyes. It definitely touched my emotions. Again, very enjoyable!

— *Allen Black*



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I had a great time reading this book, and with the poetry format, the eBook pdf format was great for jumping around and getting a taste of every section easily. The poems are plenary in emotion and incredibly enticing. They transmit a feeling to the reader that he/she is experiencing some of the relationships involved and kiss the heart with love found and enduring and yet remember to scrape it with the pain of love's loss.

— *Melissa Douglass*

I thought that I would just skim it quickly to get an idea of the content, and then do a more thoughtful read later. An hour later I was still reading and re-reading parts of it... The more I read these, the more I like them. I definitely connect with the works that clearly come from a direct personal experience or emotion better than the more philosophical exercises.

— *Christopher Johnson*

I enjoyed the book! I found Mark's voice refreshing and the poems interesting to read. I was surprised and impressed by the amount of personal detail revealed in the poems. As an engineer, I also liked his interspersing now and then of computer science terms. My favorite poem would have to be "Give Her a Kiss."

— *Robert Chen*

When you're not "thinking out loud" and write impulsively, driven by pure emotion, your poetry is at its best. Have you thought of songwriting?

— *Laura Dague*