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2020 Challenges

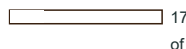


Reading Goal 2020

2020 Reading Challenge



Serena has read 17 books toward her goal of 75 books.



75 (22%)

[view books](#)

Scattered Clouds by Reuben Jackson

FEBRUARY 13, 2020 BY SERENA 4 COMMENTS

Source: Purchased
Paperback, 130 pgs.
I am an Amazon Affiliate



When you have fate kick your butt and keep you from getting a poetry collection you've been eager to read (especially when you want to be at a reading), does that lead you to enjoy the collection even more when you finally get a copy?

This is my question because this was my journey to getting Reuben Jackson's new collection. But I digress.

Scattered Clouds by Reuben Jackson is like a best hits record, but it's also a deeply personal look at Washington, D.C., love in all of its incarnations, and the power of music (in this case Jazz). "Fingering the Keys" is a section of previously published poems by Jackson, giving readers some initial flavor of his work as he reflects on his younger years, roadtrips with his father, the harsh realities of being black in America. But as a kid you don't always understand why you can't do certain things like stay in that roadside teepee shaped motel in South Carolina. In "on the road," the narrator speaks about the bargain struck with his dad to stay the night, but then says, "it worked, // so why did he return without/room keys?"

Each of these line breaks and pauses are like an interlude in which the undercurrent of the head in the music of Jackson's poems comes to the fore full force, knocking the reader off their feet and sending their mind into overdrive. There are many of these "aha" or "Mmmhmm" moments where readers are like I understand and I see where you are and what's going on, even in the most innocent of moments. When we're young and trying to find out who we are and want to be, we experiment, but there are those of us judged more harshly for experimenting outside "the comfort zone."

a lonely affair

even the most die-hard liberals
have their moments;

like the man wearing the
end apartheid button
who followed me across his bookstore;

Jackson is well aware of the power of word choice when he speaks about the man's bookstore, knowing full well that though this man is liberal, the

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narrator is from outside his known community and should be followed. Is he following him because he wants to talk, to share, or simply to monitor, to prevent, to presume? In “a lonely affair,” our narrator continues along his path, lonely as it may be, to ensure revolution does not fizzle out. By being there, out in the world and reading his poems, he’s affecting change.

“sunday brunch” has to be my favorite poem in this collection. The matter-of-fact response and sarcasm is priceless. I refuse to ruin the surprise, but how would you answer “Where do your parents summer?”

The section of “city songs” will transport you D.C. and beyond in ways you don’t expect. Readers are thrown into the deep pit of tragedy and sorrow, of borrowed breaths, and deep loneliness even in urban landscapes. The intimacy of the first section gives way to the wider world — it intrudes upon the intimacy and wrenches away the slightest sense of shelter. We’ve moved into a world where culture bears heavily down on those who do not fit neatly in it. Rather than change the tone, Jackson’s language almost lulls the reader into each situation, letting the reality of them seep under the skin.

“sky blues” is the crescendo of the collection, exploring the beauty of late-in-life love — a mutual respect and passion for the fullness of who we are. In the poems of the “Amir & Khadijah: A Suite,” Jackson becomes lyrical with love, the kind of love that can buoy a spirit in rough tides and become a lift of spirit. It’s Jackson’s song of hope, either for himself or for all of us. His heart is full of love and it is reaching out to us in line after line searching for connection.

Here, too, we find Jackson’s poem for [Trayvon Martin](#) as an angel guides the young boy home, away from danger. These final poems nod to the past and the struggles, with a hope for the future. *Scattered Clouds* by Reuben Jackson is the balm for the sting of “real” American life, laced with a hope that we can overcome, persevere, and take the lessons we’ve learned from those lost to us and apply them to our future selves to create a better tomorrow. It’s the coverage we need away from the storm without forgetting that storms do come.

I cannot urge you enough to buy these collection. Rarely do I outright tell you to buy something, but if you buy one poetry collection this year, let it be this one.

RATING: Cinquain

FILED UNDER: CHALLENGES, POETRY, POETRY READING CHALLENGE,
PURCHASED, READ IN 2020, REVIEWS TAGGED WITH: ALAN SQUIRE
PUBLISHING, REUBEN JACKSON, SCATTERED CLOUDS

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Anna (Diary of an Eccentric) • 2 days ago

Sounds like an awesome collection. Great review!

^ | v • Reply •



Serena (Savvy Verse & Wit) Mod → Anna (Diary of an Eccentric) • a day ago

Thanks for checking it out. He'll be at the book festival in May

^ | v • Reply •



bermudaonion(Kathy) • 12 days ago

Wow! I can tell you loved this collection!

^ | v • Reply •



Serena (Savvy Verse & Wit) Mod → bermudaonion(Kathy) • 12 days ago

It was beautiful!

^ | v • Reply •

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