

I. Military Writers Society of America Review

Heart Songs, Dennis Maulsby, 2022, Cyberwit, ISBN: 978-81-8253-976-1 (recipient of a 2023 MWSA gold medal and First Place award in the poetry category of the 2023 American Fiction Awards)

Heart Songs is a tour de force of a poetry collection by Dennis Maulsby. Songs of the heart can be expressed in a wide array of emotions, and this book handles all of them well, ranging from euphoria to abject depression. The author uses a variety of poetic forms to convey feelings and experiences, using sophisticated imagery to engage all the senses.

The poems range from haiku of 17 syllables to longer poems and lyrical essays. Powerful and effective word selection ushers the reader into realms he may not have been familiar with, from the wildly sensuous to the stark brutality of combat.

There is even a playful limerick to tickle the funny bone. While choosing just one favorite poem among many is impossible, I became enchanted by the eight-part offering exploring different kinds of love.

By Betsy Beard, MWSA Reviewer (January 2023)

II. Heart Songs

by Dennis Maulsby
ISBN: 978-81-8253-976-1 Copyright 2022, Cyberwit

Reviewed by LB Sedlacek, Pegasus Literary.

There's much packed into this new book of poems by Maulsby. It's a poetic dream to read since he uses different styles, themes, etc. Yes, it will remind you of music. He even titles his opening and ending Foresong and Postsong.

The poems are a mixture of free verse and some a bit more formal. The poems are lively. The prose enhances the readers' experience with the book. There's grit to it but also a bit of sparkle.

It's a neat read to experience the progression of thoughts within these verses as the book progresses. The poems are engaging. His visuals explode, flare, and perhaps extinguish within each poem.

His lines are subtle when they need to be. They also twist and move fast when they need to as well. His overall collection is riveting. He knows how to keep the pages turning. It's fresh, sharp, and absorbing.

III. Heart Songs

Dennis Maulsby

Cyberwit.net (2022)

ISBN 978-8182539761

Reviewed by Susan Violante for **Reader Views** (11/2022)

I took my time with “Heart Songs” by Dennis Maulsby. How many times did I go through this little poetry book? Only the book’s worn-down cover knows. “Heart Songs” is exactly what its title describes. It is a group of songs captured straight from its author’s heart. In it, readers will not only read the lyrics but also feel the raw vibrations of its music. Within its pages, the readers will find the big emotions of a life that has seen its share of horror, beauty, pain, and happiness. These songs will give readers wisdom and appreciation of a heart... a life lived.

Dennis Maulsby’s voice is clear, simple, and raw, presenting not-so-simple topics like war, loss, love, and dreams. I loved this contrast. I loved the little three-sentence verses placed by themselves, acting as tasty spices throughout the book.

Poems like ‘Bachelor’s Dream’ made me laugh. Others, like “Midnight on the Deck,” mesmerized me. Then I found some that for sure will never leave me. Below is a sample:

Granma in the Hood

Cut gangman with blade
U a man made

Forget Granma’s rant
Know u can’t

She tells u right
Hugs u tight

Struttin’ on the street
Bodies bullets meet

All that be left
Old woman’s fears

All that be right
Old woman’s tears

Overall, I found *Heart Songs* by Dennis Maulsby a beautiful little book of songs to be kept next to you to re-read and discover a new melody each time you do. A five-star must-have for poetry lovers!