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In And Out Of Love



Synopsis

Lammy-nominated novelist, editor, and college professor Shelley Thrasher, who grew up in a small, conservative town in East Texas, was a late bloomer. Her first published poetry collection, *In and Out of Love*, chronicles personal ups and downs during the 1980s and '90s, when she came out. Most of these 150 brief, haiku-like poems feature images that speak for themselves, influenced by poets such as Allen Ginsberg and Anne Waldman, with whom she studied writing. The first poems portray the crushes and lovers the author was involved with during this period of her life. In part two, they express the longing for something she didn't understand. Section three chronicles the painful rough spots she encountered during her journey of accepting herself as a lesbian. And the final section celebrates being in love with the woman she has now been joined with for twenty-five adventurous years. Legendary author, Lee Lynch writes about Shelley's poetry: Shelley Thrasher has a way of imbuing even the unlikeliest of words with sensuality. She writes in the style of the great lesbian Imagist poets H.D. and Amy Lowell. Her images are crystalline: "...the sea gnaws at the beach...." Thrasher celebrates life, even its deepest pain. She extols the glories of nature, classical times, art, travel, coming out, and love. *In and Out of Love* reads like a portrait of a woman who has seen the good and bad sides of life and now finds herself deeply contented while, as she titled one poem, "Peeling Summer Peaches."

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Customer Reviews

Shelley Thrasher's first volume of poetry chronicles her coming of age and coming out through poems that are snapshots of her relationships with other women significant to her journey. Threads of sexual identity and desire for connection are intertwined with some lovely nature scenery. All the poems are accessible, direct, and anchored with crisp images. A few of Thrasher's poems are so void of specifics as to prompt filling in with characters you, the reader, know well; for example: "I just / want to ask you: / what makes you think / you have a right / to all my free time?" Haven't we all wanted to speak this directly to someone? True to imagist poetry style, these are poems of observation, sharing Thrasher's view. I would have welcomed further depth, baring her emotions in these moments. Yet the observer perspective works well in conveying universal relationship energies, such as these lines from "Silence": As passion ebbs and pain subsides, silence covers us like sand. We struggle to brush off this grit, but it settles in cuts not yet healed. My recommendation? Take these poems as models for creating images with not-so-many words—worth any writer's time, for poetry or prose. This book also provides a glimpse into LGBT sensitivities through the evolving mural of courage to be true to self, and to claim that self without reservation. Easily read in one sitting, this is a tour of the ups and downs of feminine relationships through budding immaturity into stable maturity. by Jazz Jaeschke for Story Circle Book Reviews reviewing books by, for, and about women

Shelley Thrasher's poetry collection, *In and Out of Love*, is an arresting read. Thrasher carries the reader through her "struggle to be born from safe inside myself" with equal portions of whimsy, wit, wisdom, woe, and wonder. She is able to turn a phrase in ways that engage our senses and evoke our sensuality. She creates stories with the unlikeliest of characters such as lumber and chinaberry trees. Thrasher's images are bold pictures and sounds that stick with you—the gulf that "huffs and puffs," the "red-brick heart," the "Sliver of crystalized pain." If you favor rhyme and iambic pentameter, don't go here. Her poetic form is in the vein of the

contemporary modern free verse, and, for the most part, free of rhyme and meter. If, indeed, Thrasher's *In and Out of Love* represents her "struggle to be born, I, for one, look forward to the memoir she is currently writing.

At last, this lovely poet has collected her work in a book. I've been fortunate to read her work over the years and her delicate ear and practiced touch has rewarded me greatly. Thrasher's words are gentle, or thunderous; sharp, or passionate; erudite or filled with every raw emotion. The poems are snippets of reflective conversation, cries of pain, songs of enchanted love. They are accessible, brief, but linger long. Some shock with their abrupt intensity, others loose the imagination. Book-worthy, certainly, but more important to me, Thrasher's verse makes me think in poetry.

PRAISES for Shelley Thrasher's first book of poetry. It empowers a 'New Age of Romanticism' with a bright intimate language. I love this collection of her fresh imaginative poems. They are filled with love's spontaneity and Shelley's original style. She touches on the fragility of emotions with a celebration of devotion to her craft. I am looking forward to Shelley's next leap into the heart of her writing talent.

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