

Author Adrienne Ijioma's *Cuts On Me*

Reviewed by Realistic Poetry International

Adrienne Ijioma's *Cuts On Me* is a poetry collection that awakens the reader to the psychological, emotional, mental and physical battles many humans may experience while traveling the rugged road of life, using her poetry as a poignant testimony to declare that even on the darkest and cloudiest of days, we can, with will, faith and resilience, survive! And not just survive...but bloom into something virtuously beautiful.

It is a book that characterizes a woman who refuses to turn a blind eye to the countless injustices and myths revolving in our society that often deter many people from becoming the best version of themselves they can possibly become. This even includes ridding the fear of public speaking, which she addresses instantaneously in the very first poem, "*Ya'll Peoples*," valiantly surmounting this communal difficulty by poetically breaking the ice!

Author Adrienne Ijioma says, "*Sometimes I get nervous in front of a crowd, but then I try to remember ya'll just people like me*," using a down-to-earth writing diction and tone to depict her carefree audacity. We'll definitely say this sets the standard for the 'humanistic' theme of the book, underlining a well-known, disconcerting common denominator, that in all honesty, can really take a huge toll. Stage fright.

Author Adrienne Ijioma maintains our interest by juggling topics that discuss and illustrate a rash and confused society such as in the poem, "*Rage on The Road*;" a disturbing poem that shares the Author's personal experience in dealing with a mad driver on the road and tells just how far *some* humans will go to demonstrate and release their motorist frustrations!

Ijioma's reminiscent and detailed verbal illustration is a vivid example of some of the unnecessary chaos, harshness and cruelty in our world that successfully initiates and almost guarantees a repetitive cycle of suffering, pain, bitterness and anger between people. This terrible type of behavior on the road, unfortunately, causes hundreds and thousands to be afflicted and nearly tortured, just like the violent abuse Ijioma personally suffered due to another driver's "road rage."

Too many times and much too often in our society do we hear of "hit-and-runs" or fatal car accidents/incidents in which lost lives cannot be replaced. In fact, the number of fatalities as a result of reckless or aggressive, hazardous driving in society is nothing less than awful. As sad as

it may be to read of the abuse the Author suffered from this experience, physically and mentally, we are glad she decided to write about it! Poems like this raise much needed awareness for safe driving on the road while also reminding us to be careful...for what seems like a small fire can grow easily into a wild, dangerous, fiery explosion! Even when it isn't our own fault.

When it comes to speaking raw truth, it is quite easy to connect with Author Adrienne Ijioma's writing and poetry, as she does a superb job at relating to people and situations, touching on topics that are sensitive to mostly all adults, such as the unforgiving subject of debt.

The featured poem entitled, "*Debt*," speaks directly to anyone who has ever found themselves wallowing at the bottom of the barrel in life, so low, Ijioma describes a disturbing scene as an example of the soul's hungry desperation saying,

*"...Can't pay the lights, nothing to eat but rice, how low the demise, to be, looking twice at the mice, thinking: might taste nice?"*

Reality and its accompanied adversities are a huge factor in this poem, making it intense and penetrating in several different ways, *especially* if you've been down the disheartening road of debt, have suffered the aching symptom of hunger, or have been faced with the forbidding reality of homelessness.

Through expressive, poignant and insightful views on the world, we learn how Author Adrienne Ijioma uses her experiences to become a discerning and wise mind in life rather than a victim, in many poems, offering good advice and guidance that can be helpful to others while simultaneously representing who she is and what she stands for.

From a creative and technical perspective, we enjoy the flow of Ijioma's clean-cut simple rhymes, as they present her feelings and thoughts in a manner that is easily interpretable, considering poetry's eminent 'abstract' and 'subjective' reputation.

This particular style and technique of writing uses every day, ordinary vernacular rather than complex, elaborate metaphors or allegories, reflecting a lecture-like elegance that aims to express as much as persuade. A great example of this technique is captured in the spiritual poem entitled, "*Life Choices/Choose Life*."

In this poem, Author Adrienne Ijioma's words call out to all those who seek more than what the world has to offer, testifying to the glory of God and His matchless power saying, "*The earth will tremble when my God show's his power*," encouraging her audience to "*seek the true God...*"

Opening up her faithful heart, we can feel the sincerity within her words and message and admire her ability to address both good and evil, in one verse acting as guidance saying, “*Come, pick God’s Word up and his counsel do heed!*” While in the next she cautions and says, “*Satan dressed up pretty and you believed his lie,*” drawing a distinct line between the two spiritual influences she believes to play a daily role in our fate.

Going over and beyond, Ijioma even goes on to include an informational freebie at the end of the poem in which readers will be directed to an online platform that teaches and provides insight into the Jehovah’s Witnesses denomination. This spiritual mantra, “*Life Choices/Choose Life,*” is followed up with other devout selections such as, “*Narrow Gate, Cramped Road,*” “*Beloved,*” and “*Beyond the Surface.*”

The intermittent bodies of prose scattered between organized sections of poems based on theme selection is an added advantage in reading this book! Not only is it refreshing to read the detailed narration and well-written, diary-like mini sagas before diving into an emotive poetic experience, the passages also provide great depth and insight into the overall background of how and *why* some of the poems that make up this collection were originally born.

In the end, we sense that life’s vigorous course of challenges and obstacles do not silence her outspoken voice, weaken her buoyant soul, nor make her ashamed of the mistakes she’s made or cuts she she may have, physically and emotionally. Although she revisits her painful past throughout this collection to demonstrate growth and evolution, Author Adrienne Ijioma’s spirit is consistently transcendently elevated through her inspiring power-verses that humbly value her worth and represent her heart with virtue, resilience, respect, edification and love.

We absolutely enjoy this beautiful burst of enlightenment and empowerment and find more resembling pieces corresponding such as, “*A Woman Is,*” “*Sacrifices,*” and “*Woman-Girl, Lift Up.*”

In sum, Author Adrienne Ijioma’s, “*Cuts On Me,*” feels like sunshine through rain; a beautiful, intense storm coming and washing away withered weeds only to nourish dry land where she continues to plant good seeds. Seeds of hope. Seeds of optimism and seeds of goodness for days to come. Its delivery is healing and uplifting, and never forgets the uncensored, unedited struggle of life.

We’re happy to present this collection with a 5-star rating and believe this is an excellent book for women, but great enough for all!

