

Just My Thoughts

Eileen Kezia Tekyi

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Elizabeth Bishop, arguably one of the most influential writers of the twentieth century, produced a very small book of collected poems that represented her life's work. Forever careful to only publish her best work, Bishop's contributions are almost all gems, a testament to her respect for her own process of development. Eileen Kezia Tekyi, a young poet, would do well to learn from Bishop by giving her own work time to develop before publishing it for the scrutiny of the public. The poems in *Just My thoughts* are untutored expressions of emotion that do little to evoke either vision or sentiment in the reader.

Tekyi's biography describes her as "a young talented poet who spreads emotion through poetry." Many of the poems attest to that youth, taking as their subject the angst surrounding young love. The expression of emotion is Tekyi's central concern. Little attention is paid to narrative, image, concrete detail. Many of the poems take the prose poem form, although the writer does tend to use internal rhyme at the sentence level. The poems appear on double-page spreads. The left-hand page presents either a quote by the poet or a list of platitudes. On the right-hand page, a prose poem appears that often takes the "lessons" of the opposite page. For instance, "Turning Point" accompanies the following list:

Leave all the madness behind
Dry every tear
Be a winner
Be a fighter
Lost cause
Believe there will be another day
If you believe in something go for it

The accompanying poem tells the story of an upset person whose significant other has believed a malicious rumor. Tekyi writes: "I don't know what to do, I hate feeling so confused. I don't want to cry because I feel like it. Love takes time; it can also make your eyes go blind. There's never a right time to say good-bye. Am tired of thinking my tears dropped down my eyes." The poem, like the list that precedes it, uses cliché to express emotion, and, as a result, it loses most of its impact. The platitudes are not supported by revelatory detail—a telling gesture, a striking image, a specific moment. Without the accompanying details, emotion leaves little impact. In addition, there are missing question marks, misspelled words, and incorrect verb forms.

Just My Thoughts may appeal to teenagers who are simply looking for an outpouring of emotion. However, those in search of a more developed style and syntax will not find satisfaction in this book.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (January 14, 2013)

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