



The Hole Truth and Nothing...

Ron Budge

Dorrance Publishing

(96pp)

979-888683101-6

Playful and absurd, the satirical meditation The Hole Truth and Nothing... muses on iterations of the hole in life and in culture.

Ron Budge's satirical book *The Hole Truth and Nothing...* considers some of life's greatest frustrations and most popular pastimes.

The book introduces holes with depths of at least one thirty-second of an inch as vital—sources of utility and pleasure that contain endless possibilities, no matter their shape or variety. Focused on aspects of the hole and its importance, this rambling text includes poetry, dialectical sketches, extensive plays on words, and historical descriptions. Its first section sets the tone, leveraging humor to keep the text in motion. For instance, the wheel—formed by inserting a hub into the hole in the center of the wheel—is necessary for the movement of a cart and “keeps things moving unlike Congress.”

Similar quips arise throughout, as where a detailed analysis of the shapes of the letters of the alphabet carries an interrogation. Herein, the C resembles a horseshoe that is meant to be thrown against a pole or into a hole; the D, when turned on its flat side, resembles a tunnel into which cars or more phallic objects can travel. The entry on Q is arresting in its wit, cautioning men to visit the doctor if their “prized appendages” looks like the tail of the Q. Elsewhere, the book follows a character, Bob, through his day to see what items he puts inside holes—his penis and the gas nozzle among them; it's a playful and absurd storyline. And the tale of a cat, Pinto, who was de-clawed, de-fanged, and “de-nutted” (neutered) is a morbid political entry that ends with tragic, abrupt death.

Other considerations are more educational in nature—as with a discussion of the history of New Orleans, for example. The metaphorical nature of the hole is also mentioned in a short political and religious analysis at the book's end. However, the transitions between such topics are quite abrupt. Indeed, the prose has a stream-of-consciousness quality that undermines its delivery. It rambles through thoughts on sports, popular culture figures, and historical personalities (for example, it mentions a physician's fascination with breasts). However, the profusion of such references means that equally intimate knowledge of a variety of random facts is needed to enjoy the book its entirety.

Some of the book's jokes fall flat, as too much of its humor relies on stereotypical assumptions about the gender binary, such as that women are uninterested in sex and unknowledgeable about sports, whereas men are gung-ho for both. The book's descriptions of female anatomy—as with its thoughts on how the body changes during pregnancy—are crude and objectifying. Considerable humor is lost to one-liners, while stereotypical quips about Jewish and Asian people also have an off-putting effect.

The Hole Truth and Nothing... is a satirical text that takes jabs at the holes encountered in everyday life.

ALEENA ORTIZ (July 27, 2024)

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