

Thoughts Out of Season: A Journal

Robert N. Britcher

Dorrance Publishing

(194pp)

979-888925033-3

Combining personal reminiscences with ever-changing opinions, Thoughts Out of Season is a personable flash essay collection.

A collection of flash essays reflecting Robert N. Britcher's personal experiences, opinions, and reflections, *Thoughts Out of Season* covers subjects including politics, STEM, global affairs, philosophy, literature, and history—a kaleidoscope of observations that function both on their own and as part of a dynamic whole.

Trading between analyses of particular subjects, stream-of-consciousness connection-drawing, and evocations of Britcher's broader personality, this personable book includes a generous sampling of singular thoughts on varying subjects. One entry begins with Camus, reflects on personal ailments, and then commends Donald Trump for "clean living", also asserting (with sarcasm) that "A political writer bombarding me with a technical term like 'bivalve' is good enough reason to vote for Trump." Another, begun on the occasion of the selection of Kamala Harris as Joe Biden's running mate, jumps from her birthday to the 1964 World Series before asserting of Harris, "She is competent, she is handsome" and ending on notes regarding Perry Mason and guns. In such moments and others, the book challenges social norms and the views of others. Later, the book intones, "Donald Trump is talking up election rigging and underfunding the USPS handling mail-in ballots. Sedition in plain sight."

Elements of Britcher's past are also drawn into his present-day reflections, with peeks into his childhood and long career proffered in the course of his coverage of contemporary events, including Donald Trump's impeachment hearing, COVID-19, and a stroke. Some such transitions are organic, achieved in the manner of conversational switches, but they also impede any sense of organization or structure. And while the essays, which range from a few lines each to several paragraphs long, appear in the chronological order of their composition, no connections are established between their bevy of themes, and there are no real throughlines outside of Britcher's own voice to help them flow together. As the book moves from one essay to the next, it merely trades between the many different themes that it aims to consider.

But despite speeding through a plethora of subjects, the book's prose is articulate and eloquent. It builds some credibility through its consistent citation of credible sources and references to the work of philosophers Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Distracting typographical and grammatical errors appear throughout, though.

With moments of dynamism, *Thoughts Out of Season* filters general observations on the world through personal thoughts, experiences, and opinions.

KIRIANA MCAFFEE (May 2, 2024)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.