

Readers' Favorite Five Star reviews

Reviewed by Jamie Michele for Readers' Favorite

Dear Life by Shanta Acharya presents a deep dive into the human experience through a collection of poems that reflect on themes such as love, trauma, resilience, and the transformative power of language. The poems range in tone and tenor, such as the harsh realities of existence exemplified in "Nesting," where a woman endures an abusive relationship during lockdown, ultimately finding the strength to escape. "In a Time of Siege" captures the chaos and psychological scars of violence in a concert hall, questioning the roots of hatred and the quest for safety. The poem "Always Beginning" speaks on the beauty of perpetual renewal, urging readers to embrace change with curiosity and hope. In the titular poem "Dear Life," words are personified as cherished companions, highlighting their essential role in conveying emotion and fostering connection.

Shanta Acharya's original poetry in *Dear Life* is a wonderful collection that impresses from start to finish. The poems are mostly in free form and are incredibly diverse and well-crafted, allowing readers to engage deeply with a variety of focal points. Acharya's ability to pull heavy emotions out of moderately sized stanzas is a testament to her skill as a poet. Among the many, I was particularly drawn to the poems that tap into a mix of the human experience with nature, the standout being "The Tree Huggers." This piece powerfully recounts the brave actions of Amrita Devi and the Bishnoi community in their fight against environmental destruction, leaning into their inextricable spiritual connection to nature. Acharya's beautiful use of imagery and language elevates her work, making *Dear Life* the breakaway poetry compilation so far for me this year.

Very highly recommended. (Five star)

Reviewed by Pikasho Deka for Readers' Favorite

Shanta Acharya presents an enthralling collection of poems that explore the human experience in all its diverse colors with *Dear Life*. "Loneliness" is a beautiful poem that equates loneliness to a professional assassin who strikes without mercy while the victim desperately clings to life. "Staying Alive" narrates the experiences of a person who struggles to come to terms with the ramifications of the pandemic that upturned lives all over the world. "I Can't Breathe" is a poignant reminder of the gross misuse of authority displayed during the George Floyd murder. Riddled with doubt, the narrator yearns for the company of a loved one in "Thinking of You." "Against the Odds" is an empowering poem that celebrates the resilience of the human spirit amid adversity. "Sunflower Seeds" pays homage to those who lost their lives on the whims of tyrants.

Dear Life is truly an eclectic collection and contains poems that touch upon a broad spectrum of ideas and themes related to the human condition. From observational and confessional poetry to poems that tackle themes of love, war, loss, faith, and spirituality, Shanta Acharya displays a lyrical flair that feels unique and authentic and makes you introspect as well as think about the state of the world. Acharya's poetic storytelling is very immersive, as the carefully crafted stanzas invigorate both your mind and soul. These poems delve into some of the darker facets of humanity, yet they also leave you with hope and act as a soothing balm for your soul. Acharya's poetry style is intimate, but the universal themes will strike a chord with readers everywhere, regardless of background.

Highly recommended. (Five star)