

Carroll E. Arkema, *Beyond Me: Poems about Spirit in Scripture, Psychotherapy, and Life* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2014), 163 pp.

It took me much longer to complete my review of this book than I had hoped. I simply kept reading the poems, again and again, as multiple readings brought forth a deeper level of inquiry and reflection. I also recommended the book to several students, future and current pastors, who I knew were seeking new resources that in some way related to their life experience as they began their own reflective practices. And, the book was on loan for quite a few weeks at a time. I soon realized that my own reflective practice while reading *Beyond Me: Poems about Spirit in Scripture, Psychotherapy, and Life* was probably much like the dynamic process that had created the book in the first place, a process of dialogue and reflection that draws the reader into the depths of pastoral experiences, in dialogue with Scripture and infused with the Divine Spirit, evoking deeper questions about the blessings and the complexities of human life—death, illness, love, loss, emptiness, and anger.

The title of this collection of original poetry, *Beyond Me*, is the author's way of capturing the myriad of ways that the activity and healing presence of the Divine Spirit is manifest in his own life and in his practice of pastoral psychotherapy. "The Spirit-Presence is beyond me and within me—the very source of my life and breath" (p. xvi). As an ordained Presbyterian minister and pastoral psychotherapist, Carroll E. Arkema speaks from many years of practical experience in a variety of settings. These poems are intimate and honest. Arkema does not shy away from harsh realities and complex questions. He beautifully recognizes the Spirit incarnate revealed through the stories of the people he encounters professionally as well as in his own personal narrative. I am reminded, too, by reading these poems, how much healing is a lifelong process, one that is both enriched and challenged through relationship. The poems also serve to document the author's own transformation and healing, referring to personal experiences—such as "Death on the Farm and the Riddle of Samson" and "Grandpa Lost an Arm and Wrestled with the Devil, or Was It the Lord?" as well as pastoral experiences, such as "David, Goliath, and Psychotherapy," and "As Her Pastor." Arkema's poetry invites the reader into intimacy and vulnerability with candor and humor.

This book is an important resource for pastors and pastoral educators, as well as all those who provide care. Moreover, they give the reader glimpses into the journey of a reflective practitioner.

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