



After the Chisholm

by George Rhoades



Poetry - General

164 Pages

Reviewed on 03/25/2016

Book Review

Reviewed by Ryan Jordan for Readers' Favorite

After the Chisholm by George Rhoades is a collection of poetry focusing on cowboys and cowgirls, and the countryside after the Chisholm trail was closed in the 1890s. Many of the poems, especially in the beginning, focus on the clash of cultures between what the land was and what the land is becoming. In the very first poem there is a line, 'The Chisholm Trail lives now in myth and memory,' and it sums up a lot of the conflict in these poems. For example, in the poem Boots, it discusses a boot factory that the town tried really hard to keep going, but it just couldn't survive the changing times.

I found the poems to be well-written with an appeal based on the sheer lamentation of the way things are changing. I think everyone over the age of thirty will find something relatable in this, because even if you strip away the cowboy and cowgirl aspect, it is essentially about the feeling of separation between a person and culture as times change. Some of the poems are more playful than others, like Shovelin' Out The Cowlot, which points out that milk isn't the only thing you get from a cow.

I think my favorite poem was probably Sky, because it contains a lot of brilliant and evocative imagery that helped bring the climate and circumstances to life. It isn't very long, but it is very clever and enjoyable. Definitely, the one that sums up the volume, however, is Unintended Consequences, which talks about how every development brings with it unintended consequences, like cigarettes being considered healthy, cars and pollution, etc. Great poems. I love the imagery and the blending of old with the new. After the Chisholm by George Rhoades is an excellent volume, and I think anyone who picks it up will find something heartily relatable inside.