

***The Seeker's Heart* Review**

by The Rev'd Dr. Jody Clarke

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There are a wide variety of ways to read and spend time with [*The Seeker's Heart: Meditations Inspired by the Book of Psalms*](#) ([Blue Grama Publishing Corporation](#): Lethbridge, 2004) by [Regina Coupar](#). Let me, in this review, offer three such paths.

If the reader were to approach the book, *The Seeker's Heart*, as a devotional text full of prayers and poems, he or she would find it a gracious read. The text stands on its own as a contemplative work of poetry. Coupar does not attempt to mimic the Psalms, nor does she offer commentary, rather she shares with the reader the intense and intimate places she has discovered for herself when in the company of the Psalms. Throughout the book the reader is offered a scent, a taste, a glimpse of what Coupar encountered. These insights, born of meditation, are not trite or sentimental—Coupar's meditations wrestle with the age-old tension that arises when we feel separate and alone. Herein, *The Seeker's Heart* reads like a book born of heartfelt examination and nurtured by the steady mind of a writer who both enjoys images and celebrates discovery. Because I found myself enjoying the read, I would consider it to be an above average book of spirit-filled poems. For those who would like to have something to supplement their contemplative lives, *The Seeker's Heart* will serve as a welcome and at times, as a challenging companion. The book also reveals two of the author's qualities; her poetic sensibilities and her deep spirituality.

The second way of reading the text is particularly suited for those who are familiar with the Psalms. In my own spiritual practice, I work with the Psalms on a daily basis. In settling down with *The Seeker's Heart*, I often felt as if I was in the company of an old friend. The ancient themes that were so riveting to the Psalmists such as longing, seeking, fear, abandonment, love, adoration and hope are all present in Coupar's work.

For example, Psalm 131—in its original version a gentle reassuring piece of scripture that calls the people of God to remember their place in the universe, reads “But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a child quieted at its mother's breast; like a child that is quieted is my soul.” (RSV). Coupar captures the sense of perspective when she writes, “I remember I am your child. I remember my mission is love. I remember to be where I am. I remember eternity is now. When my soul is quiet.” And so for those who like to work contemplatively with variations on familiar scriptural texts, *The Seeker's Heart* will serve as a familiar friend.

The third path, and in the end the one that most animated my imagination, was found when I read the Psalm and then read Coupar's meditation. This ushered in a visceral response. At times I would wonder, “Could this be what the Psalmist had in mind” or “that is an interesting twist.” In this exercise, I was reminded that most of the Psalms are metaphysically complex. They point to something quiet beyond themselves, to a God who will never abandon the people, who is never far off even in the direst of circumstances. I applaud Coupar pushing the metaphysical dimension found in the

Psalms. As she meditates on the familiar Twenty-third Psalm, she writes, “You are our source we have all we want. You are our comfort we have all we need.” The shepherd, the green pastures and the still waters reveal the present reality of the “source” the one who has called us into being. The setting, provided by the Psalmist’s rich narrative, reminds us that we do indeed have all that we want and that there is comfort in such a tranquil place.

What I have always appreciated about Coupar’s writing over the years is that it never attempts to be more than it is. She is clear in the introduction that *The Seeker’s Heart* is a book of prayers and poems that were inspired by her meditation on the Psalms. There is a minimalist quality to Coupar’s writing. The poems tend to strip the Psalms down to their bare essence. Admittedly, something is lost in the translation from poignant scripture to meditative poetry. But something is also gained. Coupar does not waste her words—her imagery is consistently clear and clean, it is at times provocative, delightful and always interesting. Coupar is a poet who likes to go deep, without wasting her time or that of the reader. I liked the challenge.

In the end, I will use *The Seeker’s Heart* as a frank and insightful companion in my own meditations. There will be occasions when it will be used as an uncluttered prayer, as a familiar voice and also as a dissonant tone that will remind me to push more deeply into the heart of the Psalm.

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