



Readers' Favorite®

Book Reviews and Award Contest

Book Review Mini-Critique



Below you will find ratings (scale of 1-5) with descriptions for the major parts of your book followed by your Readers' Favorite review. Although these are general ratings we hope they will give you an insight into how others may view the different components of your book. These are the opinions of your reviewer, and although your reviewer is not an expert literary critic or professional editor, they are at the very least, an avid reader of books just like yours.

Title: Ring of Fire
Subtitle: Selected Poems 1972–2008
Author: Alessandra Gelmi
Genre: Poetry - General

Appearance: The appearance of a book can make a significant impact on the experience of a reader, whose enjoyment is often enhanced by an enticing cover, an intriguing table of contents, interesting chapter headings, and when possible, eye-catching illustrations.

5

Plot: The characters of a book should be well defined with strengths and flaws, and while they do not have to be likable, the reader does have to be able to form a connection with them. The tone should be consistent, the theme should be clear, and the plot should be original or told from a unique perspective. For informative books--those without plot and characters--this rating refers primarily to your concept and how well you presented it.

5

Development: Development refers to how effectively you told your story or discussed your topic. The dialogue should be realistic, the descriptions should be vivid, and the material should be concise and coherent. Organization is

5

also a key factor, especially for informative books--those without plot and characters. The order in which you tell your story or explain your topic and how smoothly it flows can have a huge impact on the reader's understanding and enjoyment of the material.

Formatting:

4

Formatting is the single most overlooked area by independent authors. The way in which you describe scenes, display dialogue, and shift point of view can make or break your story. In addition, excessive grammatical errors and typos can give your book an amateurish feel and even put off readers completely.

Marketability:

5

Marketability refers to how effectively you wrote your book for your target audience. Authors may include content that is above or below the understanding of their target reader, or include concepts, opinions or language that can accidentally confuse or alienate some readers. Although by its nature this rating is very subjective, a very low rating here and poor reviews may indicate an issue with your book in this area.

Overall Opinion:

5

The overall starred rating takes into account all these elements and describes the overall reading experience of your reviewer. This is the official Readers' Favorite review rating for your book.

Review:

Reviewed by Gail Wickman for Readers' Favorite

Alessandra Gelmi's collection, *Ring of Fire: Selected Poems 1972-2008*, brings together poetry that touches in one way or another on the topic of suffering. Don't expect these more than two dozen poems to be anything like any other poems about suffering that you have read. The topics range from the achingly painful, such as lost love to the inability to conceive to orphaned children to the frailty of age, to the breathtakingly shocking, such as torture and child abuse. More than once I had to reread a poem because the revelation at the end wrenched the early lines into a new focus. Gelmi does not write easy poetry, she writes rich poetry.

Alessandra Gelmi has an incredible talent for voice, irony and image. The three residents in "Visiting the Nursing Home" all have distinct voices, as does the speaker in "Deliverance." Gelmi's use of irony can be political or personal. In "Casualties," we see the pain of orphanages, with a last line that punctuates the inhumanity of institutions; in "Television," the last line makes us want to cry for every abandoned child who dreams of a loving birth mother. It is perhaps Gelmi's images and the fresh language she uses to describe them that truly make *Ring of Fire: Selected Poems 1972-2008* a pleasure to read. In "Over Dinner," she compares needy women to "these gulls circling above you/ready to swoop down/Cannibals in white brassieres" and describes herself as a baby as looking "like Benito Mussolini/Bald like bomb-razed land."

If you enjoy rich poetry that takes some time to unpack, I highly recommend Alessandra Gelmi's collection *Ring of Fire: Selected Poems 1972-2008*.