



Pacific Book Review

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Title: Restless Heart: A Novel

Author: T. William Phillips

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Genre: Fiction

Reviewed by: Barbara Miller

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T. William Phillips emerges on the literary stage of greatness with his destined-to-be-epic novel *Restless Heart*. "To thine own self be true," echoes from William Shakespeare, whereas "Justice by God. Truth by will. Duty by heart," will be etched in the memory of the readers of T. William Phillips' exquisite novel.

The book is appropriately titled *Restless Heart*, as "restless" is indeed the proper adjective to describe the heart of Konrad Quintero de Leon. The reader is taken on a journey throughout the expanding United States of America during the mid 19th Century, a formative era often overlooked in contemporary literature. Written in the first person, as if it were an ambrosial diary professing the most intimate thoughts and observations of Konrad, the reader gets immersed within this novel. It is fair to say the book is written within Konrad's mind. The events are seen through his eyes, the dialog from his words or to his ears, his destiny chosen by his thoughts, revealed only to him as well as to the privileged readers. This creates a most memorable experience, transporting one into a surrealistic zone laying witness to this man's life from within his mind, through the words of his narration, as honest as a confession to God.

Phillips writes a complex storyline not unlike how Charles Dickens' told his story in his novel *Great Expectations*, is reminiscent of love's passion and tolerance similarly to Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, and exhibits the power of destiny like in *Doctor Zhivago* from Boris Pasternak's novel. Yes, those are bold statements, I realize, but that's the tone of *Restless Heart*. Take, for example, an excerpt when Konrad was fighting with the Texas Rangers Phillips writes:

"What if I die here today? I asked myself. What if this is the last thing I ever do? Has my time come so soon? Could it be? Is it possible that my fate is to die here in the walls of this Mexican city? If it is my fate to die now, will I be happy with the life I leave behind? No! There is so much more I must do! So much I don't know!"

T. William Phillips has certainly done his research establishing his characters with complete credibility, conviction and confidence. Paralleling history with exact adherence to people and events which helped shaped this country; he interlaced human conduct within his characters with an inherent wisdom beyond his years. The self-evident amount of work that has gone into his creation shows a humble respect for those fortunate enough to find the opportunity to read his novel. My advice to all is if you can't find the opportunity to read this – make it. This book should be required reading by English Literature courses and novelist's workshops. Impeccable in presentation, T. William Phillips is by all accounts destined to become renown in our day as a contemporary literary force and an inspiration to all writers.