*And This House is Only a Nest*, by Jose Oseguera rev. by Kayla Taylor

Wayfarer Books

*And This House is Only a Nest* is a book of poems written by Jose Oseguera. He is an L.A. based writer whose stories range from poetry, short fiction, and literary nonfiction. He has been nominated for Best of the Net award in 2018 and twice in 2019, and many other awards. *And This House is Only a Nest* talks about the bonds we build with our family as we grow, and the poems filled within the book speak on personal life experiences and memories from Oseguera’s childhood and life lessons from when he became a father.

The poems use bolded lines sometimes to give emphasis on the statement Oseguera is making and give a deeper sense of meaning for that line. The form of the poems often stray from a familiar stanza structure and into an essayistic style, which helps create the feeling of reading a story. Oseguera has three title sections in his poetry book called “Bone,” “Muscle,” and “Sinew.” Every single section is dedicated to someone from his family, and the life lessons he learned from them. As the poems continue, we get a deeper sense of why Oseguera chose these specific titles for his poetry book, and we get a deeper sense of meaning as we learn Oseguera wants his readers to have emotion stir in them while reading his words. The poetry book pays homage to family ties, and makes you connect your own personal matters to the poems.

We see that the first poetry book “Bone” gives insightful meaning about Oseguera’s interactions with his grandfather as he was growing up:

*“I wanted to do it right*

*because the only thing that pleased him*

*was to never have to repeat himself.*

*he hated this more than sumbitch guests*

*who came to drink his water and flushed his toilets.”*

The stanza uses descriptive language that paints a vivid picture on who Oseguera’s grandfather is. Although the stanza does not have a rhyme scheme it has a pattern of putting periods and starting a new line, but not capitalizing that first letter as if it were a new sentence. The structure is almost broken which creates more of a fluid read and allows the words to stand out more creating an impact. The title of the poetry book *And This House is Only a Nest* relates to building the foundation of who he is now and how that has made him the man he is. When birds build their nest the first thing they do is collect twigs and sticks putting them in the location they need to be. “Bone” is the first step to making a body whole.

In the second half of the poetry book called “Muscle.” This half is dedicated to Oseguera’s parents and speaks on the relationship between his mother and father. We see a different form in the second half of the poem. This half is quite like prose pieces, and it reads like an essay, but a descriptive essay. Oseguera takes us through a new perspective lens in this half of his poems. He speaks about their marriage and what he saw, “This was their bliss—to hurt one another—/ their normal, better or worse,/ their happily ever after, their I do.”

 This poem switches with its structures and tone. It begins quite formal then switches to a relaxed tone taking a first-person point of view approach beginning at the second line. This stanza sows the meaning of relationships for Oseguera, because his parents are a big part of his life. The “Muscle” is now being formed in Oseguera’s life. After birds collect sticks or twigs, they begin to weave the materials they have through the stick so it can create a foundation for them. The second half is called “Muscle” now we see the foundation of “Bone” has something to intertwine itself with to create a sturdy foundation.

The last half of Oseguera’s poetry book is called “Sinew” and that speaks on his journey of being a father for the first time. We see a new side of Oseguera while he documents this journey. This last section of poems switches form and tone quite often. Oseguera is using everything from his foundation to now build a foundation with his son, and says, “**My son is starting to recognize faces /** And mistrust those he doesn’t.”

The bolded line is used quite often in the poetry book to emphasize on the importance that line has with the rest of the poem. This poem has creative structure, because Oseguera sets up the poem as a prose piece but keeps the same structure elements of what a poem is. This stanza gives us brighter insight on Oseguera’s entrance into the world of fatherhood. All the poems in the last section of the poetry book speaks on the most important aspect, starting a family of your own, and using the moments he learned as a child to build important moments with his son.

The final step of a bird building its nest is to add their materials to mud or anything they can find to make their nest strong. “Sinew” is a muscle that ties bone and muscle together making the body whole. By the end of the collection, Oseguera is portraying the meaning of feeling whole.

Oseguera has shown us the important meaning of family and how they are the foundation for everything you do in life. The name *And This House is Only a Nest* carries a deeper meaning. Oseguera’s goal is to speak about who built the foundation in him, and they were. Each family member had a role in his life that helped him become who he is today.

Oseguera builds a family with his readers. We get a front row seat on who he was in his youth and his connections with his family. Family is the most important foundation to have because they build who you are as a person, because you learn from them as you grow. We see Oseguera grow in this book, and we get a deeper understanding on what his life was like and how it created an impact on him and his readers.

The book lets us read deeper into what goes into building a foundation for a family is, and how it is done. We also see the unique structure of poems, and Oseguera plays around with the what the norm of a poem should be creating different structures, and phrases for his poems. He gets personal with us, and that enchants us more as readers, because we can connect with him. Oseguera shows us the good and the bad moments from his life that have had a lasting impact on him. *And This House is Only a Nest* will teach you what the deeper meaning of love and what family really means.