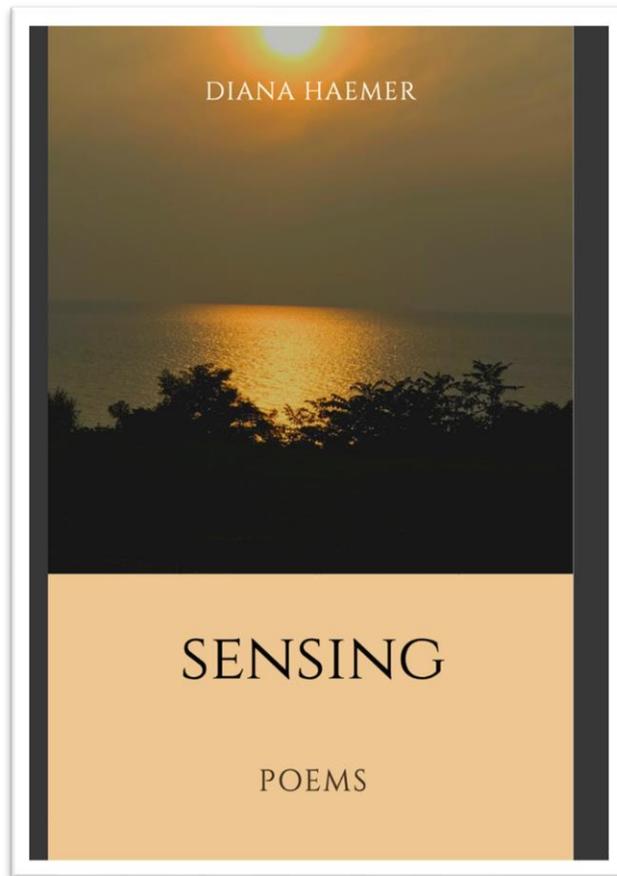




## “Book Review: *Sensing*”

*Reviewed by Madeline Barbush*



### **Personal poetry & the search for true meaning**

In her autobiographical collection, *Sensing*, Diana Haemer retraces her steps from now all the way back to her early childhood, examining the moments of loss that sting and the truths gathered along the way. With clarity and intense excavation, she weaves her way through the poems honestly and with a searching mind for personal landmarks.



*Sensing* is divided into five lofty sections: **nature, musings, growing up, love, and heroes.**

In each, Haemer explores the sharpest of her growing pains and the story of herself on her own terms. She is honest and unapologetic, admitting directly that these poems are for her—that the writing of this collection is part of her story.

In “Me Time with Myself and I,” she writes:

*For now, Myself and I write  
In the time we've allotted for Me;  
I have big dreams and  
Myself has big fears, but  
One day we will  
All be united.*

Like many others in this collection, this poem evokes a confidence of where she is now and where she will go after this, while also weaving in an admittance of her fears and self-doubts. Haemer is a clever poet with an ability to turn clichés on their head. Perhaps my favorite instance of this is her proclaiming that “The One” for her is the man who made her realize her faults and naivety in love.

*Sensing* is interesting because we look into a young life full of heroes, loves and passions, but when it comes to the more personal poems, Haemer goes one of two ways.

Poems like “Cape Cod Dream,” which reflects her love of the sea and her family’s traditions, are singularly autobiographical, but warm and soft in tone, reflective of the good of these poems. But in another sense, they can have us feeling on the outside of the experience because that which she is writing about is described too generally. In her section, **Heroes**, we’re told the ways in which these people are noteworthy and deserving of admiration, but we don’t get the chance to understand who they really are. Because of this, at times it can feel like we are witnessing a meditation rather than invited to go on the journey with her.



However, with this earnest approach, Haemer is able to break down the walls to her self in a way that feels intimate, like a chance to watch her grow. While the personal nature can occasionally detract from our ability to connect with it, it's still an evocative collection with plenty to admire.