

**You Are Enough: The Journey to Accepting Your Authentic Self**  
By Jacques Fleury

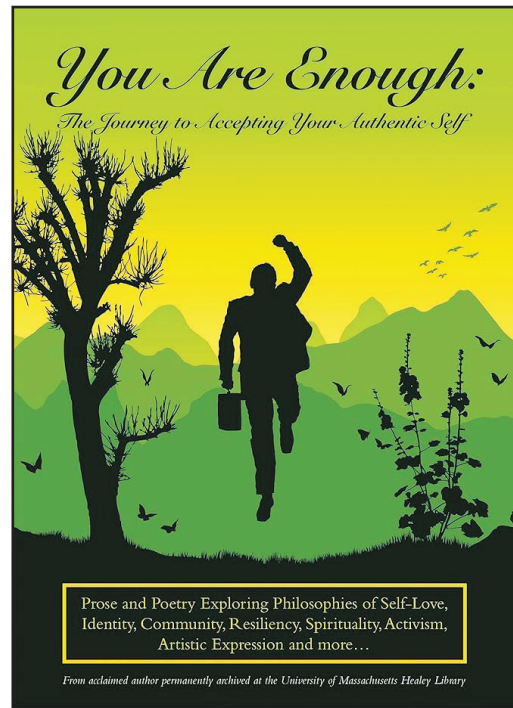
Review by Duane Vorhees

Jacques Fleury marches in the long parade headed by drum major Walt Whitman. But many observers from the street are still uncertain of the spectacle. One of Whitman's early literary friends and admirers, John Townsend Trowbridge, recalled that he found in the poet's first (1855) edition of *Leaves of Grass* "much that impressed me as formless and needlessly offensive; and these faults were carried to extremes in the second and enlarged edition of 1856" and that much of the early criticism centered on "his unrhymed and unmeasured lines." And

Trowbridge also referred to Ralph Waldo Emerson's remark on Whitman's later work: "No more evidence of getting into form." Whitman was ignored by the establishment for most of his writing career, and when noticed he was reviled and ridiculed, but his work was the beginning of what is known as free verse.

While free verse has become the dominant form of contemporary American poetry, and has largely shucked its socially "offensive" character, it still has many detractors among those who relish what Whitman called the "ballad style," with its emphasis on rhythm and rhyme. Although he also indulges in rap-style rhyming, Fleury reflects on this dichotomy between acceptable and unconstrained poetry (imposed by "an all-white order" with its "long history" of imposing its "cultural values and / Socio-political power" in his free verse poem, "Random Musings about Submission," in which he reflects on the rejection of one of his poems by a nameless publication, "Thank you for your submission. But your work is not a good fit for our publication." In response, Fleury launches into a racially-charged defense of his identity as a non-binary non-WASP poet, writing as "an ignoble omnivorous muskrat." After tracing his poetic heritage back to the epics of Gilgamesh, Beowulf, and Roland, he demands an "all-inclusive literary faction / Where ALL postulatory voices are worthy of publication" and he vows to continue to submit but NEVER to their behest for submission!!!!

In "Who Am I?" Fleury further defines his identity as a "multilayered entity ... / a building block of heterogeneity." (He briefly adopts an effective set of off-rhyme couplets, "I am a malady / I am a remedy / I am a rainbow / I am a shadow"), while in another poem, "Possible Causes and Effects of Cited High Blood Pressure," he itemizes standard medical data (family history of heart disease, poor dietary and sleep habits) and adds racism to the list. However, despite the bitterness expressed in much of his



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work, he also notes, in "The Only Way to See the Stars..." that such seeing is "through the darkness."

So, Fleury's free verse is free enough to incorporate occasional diversions into "ballad style" renderings. But, again according to Trowbridge, even Whitman's own pioneering "writings became ... more consciously literary in their aim." Or, as Emerson remarked, in a different context, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds."

*Duane Vorhees, Ph.D. is an American poet in Thailand. He is the author of THE MANY LOVES OF DUANE VORHEES, HEAVEN, GIFT: GOD RUNS THROUGH ALL THESE ROOMS, MEMORIES ARE LINKED LIKE OASES, A CONSIDERABLE SHARE OF FELICITY, THE WOMB AND THE BRAIN and Between Holocausts. Born in Farmersville, Ohio, USA, he graduated from Bowling Green State University with a doctorate in American Culture Studies. He has taught at Seoul National University, Korea University, and the Asian Division of the University of Maryland University College (now the University of Maryland Global Campus).*