



Feathered Quill Book Reviews
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Restless Heart

By: T. William Phillips
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“My restless heart beats to a rhythm of its own. A rhythm that has been lost in time and nature and has become so deeply hidden that few ever hear it...My restless heart is a map with no end.” So begins T. William Phillips’ novel about Konrad Quintero de Leon, a young man in love with life, thirsty for knowledge and adventure, and driven to explore the world beyond the strangling confines of aristocratic city life in the 1840s.

Konrad’s restlessness takes him to Europe, New Orleans, Texas, Mexico and beyond as he searches to discover what kind of man he wants to be. Scholar, swashbuckler, gentleman, lover, warrior – Konrad tries on every hat that interests him in his quest to fulfill his wanderlust. The author paints a detailed portrait of Konrad, the embodiment of the passionate spirit of youthful maleness. “I have this insatiable thirst to see and touch and taste everything,” Konrad says. “I want to experience and learn as much as I possibly can – while I can.”

Phillips uses this portrait of a young man freed from the restrictions of society in order to render a time in life when one is able to see the social rules objectively. Konrad is resistant to fitting into “civilized” society. He chafes at the restrictions of the aristocracy. Yet he maintains a visitor status in the other worlds he steps into as well. Although Phillips has incorporated a great deal of careful historical details into this clearly well researched book, the tone and verbiage remains based in the 21st Century. Thus Konrad has a time-traveler quality, perhaps an apt reflection of his “otherness” mindset.

Although there is the appealing social commentary of *The Graduate* in this book, the overall boyish, romantic view of the open road, women and life feels very much like the exhilaration of an Indiana Jones movie, particularly in the sections when Konrad is a Texas Ranger. The author imbues Konrad with superhero qualities that carry the reader through the middle of the book at a galloping, sword-slinging, shoot-‘em-up pace. Readers fight alongside Konrad during a battle of the Mexican-American War, “I was among the first to make it to the top and was immediately confronted by a Mexican

soldier who attacked me with his bayonet. With my left arm, I knocked his rifle away from my body, and with my right hand, I drew my sword and swiftly stabbed the soldier through the gut.... We stormed through the doors of Bishop's Palace and were greeted by an explosion of gunfire. We fired back as we charged inside." Can you almost hear the exciting soundtrack?

Konrad has his soft side too, and Phillips has created a fine balance between yeehaw exploits and quiet intimate moments. Konrad becomes entranced by the beautiful, free spirited Anastasia, who he describes as "the metaphor to which all beautiful things were compared." Will Konrad choose to be with the woman he loves or his need to quell his restlessness? The author offers tantalizing tastes of this romance throughout *Restless Heart* which culminate in a dramatic conclusion.

Phillips carries readers eagerly along on Konrad's adventures with his fluid story-telling ability and nice descriptive language. Though *Restless Heart* is a substantial length (a bit over 500 pages,) the story is well edited and remains captivating from beginning to end. No doubt many readers will look forward to another book from this young writer.

Quill says: Set in 1840s America, this timeless tale of young manhood offers an engaging read as it delivers romance, adventure, and thoughtful reflection all in one thrilling coming-of-age story.