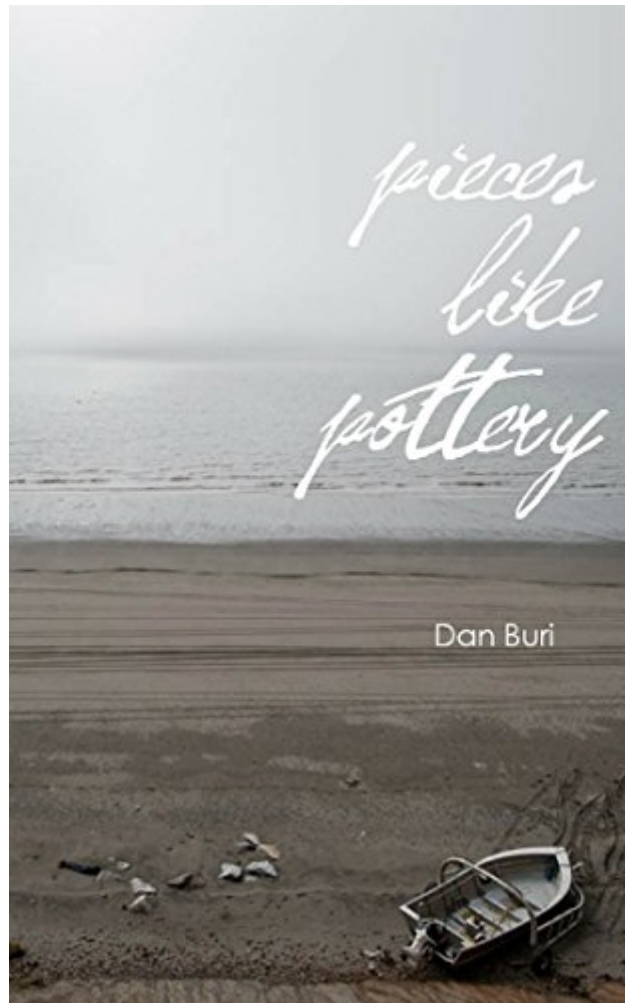




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# Pieces Like Pottery



## Synopsis

#1 BESTSELLER. The first collection of short fiction from Dan Buri, *Pieces Like Pottery*, announces the arrival of a new American author. Critics are raving: "Pieces Like Pottery hits you in the feels." - CJ Leger, *The San Francisco Globe* "Immensely powerful, challenging, and emotionally-charged. 5 Stars." Stacey Garrity, *Whispering Stories* "Something to be cherished and relived. 5 Stars." Devi Nair, *The Verdicts Out* "We can all learn from this book. 5 Stars." Colleen Ozment, *Paws and Paper* "Wow. Read this book. 5 Stars." Megan Verwey, *GirlPlusBook* In this distinct selection of stories marked by struggle and compassion, *Pieces Like Pottery* is a powerful examination of the sorrows of life, the strength of character, the steadfast of courage, and the resiliency of love requisite to find redemption. Filled with graceful insight into the human condition, each linked story presents a tale of loss and love mirroring themes from each of the five *Sorrowful Mysteries*. In *Expect Dragons*, James Hinri learns that his old high school teacher is dying. Wanting to tell Mr. Smith one last time how much his teaching impacted him, James drives across the country revisiting past encounters with his father's rejection and the pain of his youth. Disillusioned and losing hope, little did James know that Mr. Smith had one final lesson for him. In *The Gravesite*, Lisa and Mike's marriage hangs in the balance after the disappearance of their only son while backpacking in Thailand. Mike thinks the authorities are right "that Chris fell to his death in a hiking accident" but Lisa has her doubts. Her son was too strong to die this young, and no one can explain to her why new posts continue to appear on her son's blog. *Twenty-Two* looks in on the lives of a dock worker suffering from the guilt of a life not lived and a bartender making the best of each day, even though he can see clearly how his life should have been different. The two find their worlds collide when a past tragedy shockingly connects them. A collection of nine stories, each exquisitely written and charged with merciful insight into the trials of life, *Pieces Like Pottery* reminds us of the sorrows we all encounter in life and the kindness we receive, oftentimes from the unlikeliest of places.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It's clear from other reviews that these stories resonate deeply with some readers. Burl's themes and concepts are certainly worthwhile, and it's clear that the author has a personal grasp of what it means to grapple with the painful, bewildering passages in the human journey. Each of these stories is an earnest quest to explore and articulate the inner lives of its characters and the things that make them most human: love, loss, and the tenuousness of connection. Alas, it's that very earnestness that gets in the way of these stories having the impact they could. The author seems to be so taken up with ensuring he conveys every aspect of every character's thought or action or emotion "whether or not it advances the story" that his efforts result in repetition and telling rather than showing. Both his characters and his narrative voice too often veer past the borders of reflection into outright preaching. Ironically, the story I thought worked the best, "Father", features a protagonist, a priest, who seems less given to recursive rumination on his personal philosophy than many of Burl's other characters in this collection. This book would benefit from the attention of a thorough and stern editor. Every one of these stories would be immensely strengthened by going through a process of distillation. Most of them are considerably longer than they need to be; I wish the author trusted his readers to make the connections he points towards rather than leading them by the hand over every step. Additionally, there is a tendency toward awkward and sometimes incorrect word choices. Again, a seasoned editor could cut away much of the tangled verbiage that surrounds the worthy essentials of these pieces.

I'm not sure that 'enjoy' is the right word for this book. I found it sad, poignant - with the occasional

brush of humour - riveting and beautiful. A collection of short stories and poems about love and loss and the impact it has on people's lives, this book reaches deep into your soul. Although the underlying thread is quite sorrowful, I felt that there was also hope. The hope that although we might be faced with a life altering event which threatens to bring us to our knees, we also possess an inner strength that can help us stand tall once more, just maybe not in the way we expect. I imagine that any book based around grief and those who are grieving could have a tendency to wallow, to become lost in itself, but Dan Buri doesn't drag it out, rather the style and pace of each story is quite brisk, not allowing the reader to become maudlin. The characters are normal everyday people with everyday flaws and imperfections, people you can relate to dealing with situations you may recognise and the writing is eloquently simple. I did have to read it in short bursts as I needed to remember to breathe! A very powerful book!

This is a most amazing collection of "pieces like pottery, stories from the lives of various people, moving and melancholy and full of words of wisdom. From each one of the protagonists of those extraordinary stories we can learn something: the parents who try to cope with the loss of their son, the gay young man who visits his wise old teacher for the last time, the woman who comes back home to her husband after some time alone. They and all the other wonderful characters we encounter along the way teach us how to be ourselves, give to others, enjoy every moment in life that may sound like something we've had before, but it's being told in a new and beautiful and fascinating way. This book really gives the reader something: strength, and hope and a whole treasure chest full of wise and beautiful words to remember in all sorts of situations in life.

"Pieces of Pottery" by Dan Buri was a brilliant book of nine stories, which stirred up my emotions. The first story was about two parents trying to come to terms with the loss of a child. It was indeed a sad story. The second was about the theory that a child's nature is nurtured in the womb. That theory may or may not be correct, but my personal opinion is that it is true. In the third story, patrons unloaded their burdens to the bartender who was a good listener. It is surprising how both a dockworker and the bartender carried the same burden for many a year, until the bartender got the dockworker to reveal why he frequented his bar. Another story was about school days and the taunts with which a student had to endure. I found that The Ballad of Love and Hate was the best story of all. This one brought tears to my eyes. After reading it I changed my mind about taking some time off alone. Dan Buri is a very good storyteller and I enjoyed reading his book.

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