



Title: The Dream of Water

Author: Kyoko Mori

Description:

In an extraordinary memoir that is both a search for belonging and a search for understanding, Japanese-American author Kyoko Mori travels back to Kobe, Japan, the city of her birth, in an unspoken desire to come to terms with the memory of her mother's suicide and the family she left behind thirteen years before.

Throughout her seven-week trip, Kyoko struggles with her ever-present past and the lasting guilt over her mother's death. Although she meets with beloved cousins and other relatives, she agonizes over the frustrating relationship she barely maintains with her fierce father and selfish stepmother. Searching for answers, Kyoko attempts to find a new understanding of what her father is really like, and how it has affected her own place in two distinct worlds. As her time to leave draws near, Kyoko begins to understand that her family connections may be a powerful cry of the heart, but it is the new world that has given her escape from a lonely past and the power to believe in herself.

Reviews

Kirkus Reviews:

In a poetic and emotionally charged account of a journey back to her native Japan, Mori creates beautiful scenes even as she uncovers painful truths about her family and her past. This beautifully written voyage through a "legacy of loss" is a trip well worth taking.

The Wall Street Journal:

Poetic ... Remarkably honest ... Mori describes her experiences with an admirable mixture of forthrightness and restraint.

Seattle Times-Post Intelligencer:

[A] compelling memoir ... lyrical ...

Los Angeles Times Book Review:

Astonishingly beautiful ... Through the clarity filters the beauty of a large heritage that Mori is by now too American to share, but still Japanese enough to appreciate its redeeming value and to be in some measure restored by it.

San Francisco Chronicle:

Magical ... enlightening ...

School Library Journal:

A poignant and honest memoir by a Japanese American woman who returns to her homeland after many years' absence. Mori explores the emotional and spiritual complexities of having severed ties with loved ones, and how a change in time and place recasts, taints, and illuminates one's perception. Central to her personal observations is the author's inability to forgive her father for his emotional and physical abuse after her mother's suicide. This narrative is in part about the young woman's journey but it is also about forgiving and forgetting even though Mori, herself, is unable to do either. Although she is unable to come to terms with her relationship with her father, she arrives at a better understanding of her mother's motivations and decisions that positively affected her daughter's life. Reminiscent of David Mura's *Turning Japanese* (Doubleday, 1992), this title by the author of *Shizuko's Daughter* (Holt, 1993) will be good reading for YAs interested in Japanese culture, women's studies, and autobiographical writing.

Library Journal:

Mori (*Shizuko's Daughter*, Holt, 1993), a college professor who now lives in Wisconsin, presents a poignant account of a journey to her Japanese homeland. We see Mori confront the tragedies that shaped her life up to the time she came to America as a teenager -- her mother's suicide when Mori was in grade school, her father's indifference and mistreatment of her, and her stepmother's petty and self-serving behavior. Writing sparsely, Mori evokes memories of her childhood as well as the landscape of contemporary Japan, offering a piquant juxtaposition of childhood and maturity, rice paddies and neon, patterns of behavior and detached analyses of them. Shining through the author's fears and insights as she encounters her parents and a culture that has now become quite distant are her own redoubtable inner strength and the warmth of her mother's family and her school friends. An affecting work for general readers.