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Forty-Three Septembers: Essays



Synopsis

Book by Gomez, Jewelle

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Customer Reviews

In this collection of 15 personal essays, Gomez (*The Gilda Stories* , Firebrand Bks., 1991) writes from the perspective of a "middle aging" black lesbian comfortable with her past and uncertain of the future. She writes with unwavering love, warmth, and appreciation of family members, especially of her African American/Native American great-grandmother who raised her. Within the story of the interrelationships of family, Gomez interweaves African American history with the issues of racism, sexism, and homophobia among blacks and whites. In these discussions, Gomez delves astutely into the areas of literature, advertising, comedy, music, drama, religion, and politics. These essays extend beyond autobiography into criticism, making the tenor of the work somewhat inconsistent. Nonetheless, the book is enjoyable and certainly reflective of the transition "from a solid past to an unknown future." Gomez's words flow with an ease, honesty, and intellect that is mesmerizing.-
Jeris Cassel, Rutgers Univ. Libs., New Brunswick, N.J.Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

These essays recall Gomez's 43 years as a black woman, writer, and lesbian-feminist and acclaim the integration of identities in a shifting world that often prefers the simplistic to the complex and authentic. "For me in my forties," Gomez writes, "with no children, no property, no savings,

embracing the nontraditional roles of lesbian, African-American writer, and the enigmatic gaze of my mother, I am frightened of middle age. If I reject the traditional perception of who I am, who I was supposed to be, with what do I replace it? . . . My mind says there's really no limit. I write, I work as an activist. . . . But to identify myself as only what I do is a mistake that men have made too often throughout history. So what do I make of myself?" She remembers her Catholicism and the power of its passion and ritual; the word bulldagger spoken acceptingly by her grandmother, thus giving the teenage girl a term for her identity; and the trials and exhilaration of learning to swim. These compelling meditations about identity, forebears, aging, and the costliness of silence constitute a story of faith. Whitney Scott --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Jewelle Gomez was introduced to me on the most lucious of words at a conference a few years back. In this book of poems, I am once again transported to her silky-tongued voice. Her writing is smooth, deep, and sometimes dark - A good coffee for any soul.

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