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Abstract

A Second Universe

by

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A SECOND UNIVERSE is a memoir-in-essays that follows the author’s quest for belonging and healing as she bears witness to the terminal disease, impending blindness, and addictions suffered by those she loves. The settings of these essays vary from campgrounds to therapy offices to the author’s childhood homes, but the heart of the collection is rooted in the deserts of Southern Utah and focused on the clarity that comes with a connection to the natural world. Through the author’s lyric and narrative meditations, she finds that transformation and growth are often only possible in times of uncertainty and fear.

The ethos of these essays evolves throughout the memoir, reflecting the age and mental state of the author at various ages. Each essay incorporates an element of prospective storytelling as well as an examination of the past from a more nuanced, present-day perspective. Like Bernard Cooper’s coming-of-age memoir-in-essays, TRUTH SERUM, this collection finds joy and humor even in moments of despair and links personal narrative to the inherent human desire for acceptance by family and peers. Similar to Brenda Miller’s LISTENING AGAINST THE STONE, this collection depicts a child maturing toward adulthood with a strong attention to place and the pursuit of spiritual insight.

A SECOND UNIVERSE begins in a parallel universe – in the years before the author’s birth – and ends with a glimpse into the many possible ways of being in the world that extend beyond what she can see and comprehend.

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