

Mexican-American Community.” In this cemetery, gravestones are elaborately decorated not only with bunches of flowers, but with mylar balloons, coronas, banners, pumpkins, Christmas trees, Valentine’s day cards, and letters by which the living greet the deceased on birthdays, religious and secular holidays. Gosnell and Gott view “gravesite decoration as a highly symbolic visual process through which families continue to experience a sense of ongoing relationship with departed relatives.” This point is well demonstrated. Further enhancement of the case regarding ethnicity could be made by an analysis of the Spanish epitaphs which are indicated in the photographs accompanying their article. Ethnic variations in burial styles are also interestingly presented in Keith Cunningham’s chapter, “Navajo, Mormon, Zuni Graves: Navajo, Mormon, Zuni Ways.” At Ramah, New Mexico, two cemeteries reveal three distinctive eschatologies or doctrines of death and immortality. Traditional as well as acculturative practices are also exhibited by the Native American graves.

In sum, there is much of value in these collected readings. Perhaps members of the NAES will be encouraged to at least observe if not study ethnic cemetery variations within the communities in which they live. The data base is useful not only in evolving a better understanding of ethnicity but in introducing the subject to students in the classroom.

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**Aurora Levins Morales and Rosario Morales. *Getting Home Alive*. (New York: Firebrand Books, 1986) 213 pp., \$8.95 paper.**

How does one get home when being home is not safe? Or how does one get home alive when the spirit can be killed in the journey there? Getting home alive means searching for the sacred place from which all life emanates. This search is an all consuming passion for both Aurora Levins Morales and Rosario Morales.

The text is divided into eight sections beginning with a poem and closing with a poem. In between there are journal entries, letters, prose renderings and more poems. All sections, with the exception of “Flowering in the Dust of the Road” which is written entirely by Rosario Morales, are dialogues between mother and daughter.

The writing for both connects the magic of the island of Puerto Rico with the reality of the outside world which can trivialize human beings and undervalue its beauty. The mixture of prose, poetry, journal entries and essays present women as active participants in their own creation

which points out how each of them has had to fight to be able to be as they wish, not as others would like them to be.

The most poetic visions are not in the poems themselves but in the merging of the human and the islandic in the description of the childhood lover, “with glimmer of coffee bloom around him, a quality like the silver yagrumo leaves in a wind or the rain of the mountains pattering on banana leaves, the smell of steam rising from the hot roads or the sound of jibaro Spanish.”

Like most women who write, Morales and Levins Morales must accept or reject the image of woman as seen by others. Morales, the daughter, in the section “Flowering in the Dust of the Road” asserts her right to be “I am what I am I am Puerto Rican I am U.S. American I am New York Manhattan and the Bronx . . . I am Boricua as Boricuas come” and also “I’m naturalized Jewish American, wasp is new but Jewish American is old show, Take it or leave me alone.” It is the images and the range of moods which make the authors’ text engrossing reading. One hopes to find in their company the home they search for with the whole family.

The “Ending Poem” appropriately named, is a statement which summarizes the search for identity which merges a multi-faceted history into a being who “will not eat ourselves up inside anymore./ And we are whole.”

Each section of the collection has a theme which holds it together, and they all represent the collective effort of women who can weave beautiful tapestry of individual colored threads or the more homey metaphor of the quilt which Morales and Levins Morales use, providing for the reader colorful squares with interesting designs. One needs only to stop and examine closely. The book incorporates two women’s voices in the effort for self-definition within ethnic cultural boundaries.

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