

Asian Women United of California, ed. *Making Waves: An Anthology of Writings by and about Asian American Women.* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989) 482 pp., \$16.95 paper.

Making Waves is an impressive collection of writings that includes poetry, fiction, and autobiography and historical, sociological, and political essays about American women who came from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Burma, and Thailand. This is quite a feat. While non-Asians tend to stereotype Asians and lump them together, their cultures, traditions, and histories are diverse. *Making Waves* includes stories of Vietnamese boat refugees, Japanese picture brides, World War II camp detainees, Chinese prostitutes and grandmothers with bound feet, Filipinas looking to escape poverty by marrying American men through the Cherry Blossom network, and the list goes on. The personal accounts are compelling. The background essays—on the Asian American women's movement, on Indian marriage advertisements in the United States, on the Asia American women's labor movement, on Asian-Pacific wife battering, on women in politics and the media, on interracial marriages and families, on Asian American lesbians—give us insight into aspects of these cultures that are not well known. Connie Chung and Patsy Mink are national figures, but most of the women profiled in *Making Waves* have not been recognized.

Written by fifty-three contributors, *Making Waves* is the most comprehensive collection on Asian American women covering time, ethnic groups, and genres, to appear. It is also the first major collection of primarily unpublished works by and about Asian American women since the early 1970s. The editors have made efforts to include women of every class and many Asian cultures. As a result, most of the material is nonfiction in the form of oral history or journalism since many immigrant groups do not have a literature that is written or in English yet. A generous appendix includes "A Chronology of Asian American History," notes on contributors, and extensive footnotes. To obtain the material for this volume, the editors worked through many channels to reach these communities and tried to give all Asian American groups equal representation, although they explain this was not always possible, particularly with new and emerging groups.

After a useful general introduction, the book is divided into seven sections: immigration, war, work, generations, identity, injustice, and activism. While the editors state there is a water image through the book, purportedly to tie the sections and ethnic groups together, this image is not immediately apparent except, of course, in the title. Nevertheless, the writing by this diversity of authors holds up well and is of a consistent quality and readability, making this an accessible book for the general reader. One outstanding piece is "You're Short Besides" by Sucheng Chan, a powerful autobiographical essay about being physically handicapped (from childhood polio) as well as Asian American, female, and short, yet overcoming these strikes (or assets to the Affirmative Action team) with

humor and insight. Another standout is "Mosquitoes in the Main Room," a short prose piece by Meena Alexander based on the gang rape of a woman at a police station in Hyderabad in 1978. "My Mother's Purple Dress," by Evelyn Lee and Gloria Oberst, through oral history and interviews, pieces together the shattered psyche of a Vietnamese refugee; "War Story," by Elaine H. Kim, is a poignant account of her experience during the little-remembered Korean War; and "Makapuu Bay" is Wakako Yamauchi's gentle story of passion, choices, and separation by war, geography, and time. The editors' purpose, above all, was to refute the passive-submissive stereotype: "This anthology shows that we are not afraid to rock the boat. Making waves. This is what Asian American women have done and will continue to do." One thought-provoking suggestion is that the immigrants to America were the more adventurous women, those willing to take risks, to leave the known for the unknown, those desiring travel and excitement, therefore more adaptable to change and a new environment. Grounded in this theory, we could view Asian American women as a group pre-selected for immigration and as forgers of social change. These women did experience greater freedom in America, sometimes to the chagrin of parents and husbands. *Making Waves* eloquently documents the stories of their changes.

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Doris Jean Austin. *After the Garden*. (New York: New American Library, 1987) 324 pp., \$7.95 paper.

Doris Jean Austin's novel *After the Garden* unites the tragic themes of patricide and familial fury with the contemporary themes of class struggle within the black community of post-World War II America. At the center of this family saga is Elzina Tompkins, a beautiful young black woman who comes of age in the 1940s urban North. Her grandmother, Rosalie Tompkins, is a powerfully drawn figure whom Austin uses as one side of the equation to show the values of a black woman of some means, a woman who seeks to keep her granddaughter "in the garden." The wayward Jesse James, one of Truselle James' many illegitimate children, provides the other side of the equation in Elzina's struggle to grow up. The sexual attraction she feels for Jesse is the very thing Rosalie has feared. Most of the novel details the married life of Elzina and Jesse, life "after the garden."

Austin's portrayal of the class struggle within the black community is effectively handled as the reader witnesses Rosalie's values: strong religious faith, education and decorum, a life of the mind and the spirit. She tries to keep Elzina's beauty hidden behind glasses and frumpy clothes, because she fears that Elzina's sexual initiation will be her undoing. The experience of the body will turn Elzina away from the life that Rosalie has