A River, One Woman Deep

Linda Ty-Casper
Philippine American Literary House (Jul 1, 2017)
Softcover $18.99 (228pp)
978-0-9719458-5-2

Linda Ty- Casper's Filipina and Filipina-American protagonists find that their struggle to discover their personal identity is complicated by events or memories of events that happened in their homeland.

Memory plays a vital role in Ty-Casper's stories: a mother remembers her conflicted relationship with her daughter and wonders if she ever really loved her; a daughter, now middle-aged and still feeling unloved, discovers mementos of her childhood carefully preserved in a small room; another woman's happy memories of being raised by loving aunts are disturbed by hints that she might have been an illegitimate child.

In "Happy," a young Filipina woman whose parents have died in a car crash near Big Sur moves to Sausalito, where she thinks she is "safe from common memories." Playing with her image as she tries to make sense of her life, she shields herself by declaring that she doesn't remember whenever recall would be painful. In "Celery, Tulips, and Hummingbirds," a young woman's fragmented memories of her uncle's visits to her childhood home and the time he spent alone with her mother leave her wondering at the fact that her name and his are disturbingly similar.

Shadowy figures, once-loved faces that cannot now be recalled, and recollections of whispered conversations haunt Ty-Casper's characters; one of them asks, hopefully, if there is a book that explains memories. Ty-Casper does not answer that question, nor suggest that all memories are worth keeping; instead, she offers intriguing glimpses of what may happen when memories are suppressed or explored.

KRISTINE MORRIS (July/August 2017)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.