



Feminine Rising: Voices of Power & Invisibility

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Searing nonfiction and poetry pieces are collected in *Feminine Rising*, an anthology presented in the wake of #MeToo that looks back through decades, revealing how little, and how much, has changed.

Selections gather under seven themes, including “the body and sex” and “silence and subversion,” that are useful entries for classroom discussion. The sharpest selections bridge multiple themes. Work from emerging and established writers presses on through triumphs and trauma, gratitude and regret. Often, its candor is rooted in the body’s potential and violation. Topics include misogyny in midcentury academia, coming of age in the seventies, Gen X divorce, and campus rape. All-too-common experiences are unsettling even as they reaffirm the necessity of storytelling.

In the masterful “Ice Fight,” Ann Pancake weighs an Appalachian upbringing against the realization that finding wholeness won’t happen at home. In “Puberty Enchiladas,” Bonnie Morris braids the newfound separateness and joy of teenage friendships with future knowledge of loss. Maggie Thach Morshed’s “A Piece of Land” examines her Vietnamese mother’s sacrifices.

These and other essays anchor the book, displaying a subtler, multistrand dexterity that is less prevalent in the book’s poems, many of which come down to conclusive and emotional, but expected, points. Exceptions include Andrena Zawinski’s “After My Mother’s Death,” a poem in which the act of stripping a bed funnels through time to achieve a haunting final image, and Lois Roma-Deeley’s “Apologizing for the Rain,” an incisive look at the blame that women take and the expectations placed on them to answer for other people’s problems.

Feminine Rising embraces less frequently heard voices, including those of rural and working women, and does what the best anthologies do: builds force through its collective wave. For all the pain here, there’s solace in the book’s very act of reinvigorating an ongoing conversation.

KAREN RIGBY (May/June 2019)

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