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Literary

Going Through Ghosts
Mary Sojourner
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We are all wandering spirits searching for a way to reconcile the events of our pasts and move on to the next step of our existence. Unless we accomplish this transition, we will become one of those dreadful hungry spirits that is never satisfied. That is the underlying belief in *Going Through Ghosts* by Mary Sojourner.

Real ghosts move among the living. After she is brutally murdered, the ghost of Sarah Martin employs her friend Maggie to accompany her on the spiritual journey she must make before crossing to the next plane of existence. Sarah must embrace her Native American heritage, especially the wisdom and suffering of indigenous women, and reconnect with her true love, Will Lucas. Until she does this, her ghost will remain caught between life and death.

The living are also in a ghostly state, caught between past and future. Maggie must move beyond her failed relationships with her ex-husband and son. Jessie must finally bury the errors of his youth as an American soldier in Laos. Zach must learn to deal with the reality of his situation as a child of divorce, moving between parents. Bonnie must choose between Beltran and Orlen Jackson, two men she is drawn to for different reasons. Whether the character works out her or his issues on a road trip or by inner exploration, each learns that caring for another is more important than satisfying oneself.

Sojourner tells each character's story in parallel to the others, so the reader is constantly jumping from one narrative to another. This structure, along with the numerous characters that add charm and individuality to the landscape of the Southwest, may overwhelm a casual reader. However, Sojourner gives the patient reader a community of likeable outcasts who create a culture of caring in an off-the-beaten-path casino town.

Sojourner's other novels and essays are also inspired by the residents and issues of the contemporary American Southwest. Readers who want a glimpse behind the façade of Las Vegas and who enjoy a quest tale with an element of magical realism and romance should enjoy

this novel.