

## Orchestration

**Saundra Henderson Windom**

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Saundra Henderson Windom brings wisdom to bear in her heartfelt, reflective memoir *Orchestration*.

Windom was born in Korea during the war—one of the many mixed race children fathered by US soldiers with comfort women. She was also one of the first “baby lift adoptees” to be exiled from Korea to America, where she was raised by a Black family in Compton.

Though the long-lasting effects of the trauma of that adoption are covered, Windom, known then as Bang Sun, starts her story from a happy place, with her earliest memories of eating straight from the sea and following an older boy around. Still, even then, she was self-aware enough to realize that her skin color was darker than that of other Koreans, and that being noticed by any foreigners would result in her being sent away.

In Korea, an unknown person tied her to a tree, perhaps in the hope that someone good would find her and move her to one of the many new orphanages. She was taken first to a Korean orphanage, and then to an American Christian orphanage. Bang Sun was fed, clothed, and treated for medical issues before being placed on a plane to California; given a new name, Saundra; and directed to learn how to be Black and American. Throughout, she struggles with recovering her Korean identity by overcoming an early parental edict to neither think of nor speak of Korea.

*Orchestration* is a memoir of resilience and faith; Windom moves through her life story while relying on her intuition and staunch religious beliefs. Overflowing with love and appreciation for her family, she takes a whole-life approach to telling her story, explores the highs and lows of coming of age during the civil rights movement and the height of the Vietnam War, as well as her failed relationships, motherhood, and professional career in education.

DONTANÁ MCPHERSON-JOSEPH (September / October 2021)

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