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Autobiography & Memoir

Restless Wave: My Life in Two Worlds
Ayako Ishigaki Eitaro Ishigaki
Eitaro Ishigaki, illustrator
The Feminist Press
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The author (1903-1996) spent her entire life between two worlds. She was at different times Japanese and American, a member of the elite upper class and a struggling laborer, a political activist and an employee of the War Department. In addition to her life's work as an activist for social justice, she was a prolific writer who authored thirty books and numerous articles.

This volume was first published in the United States in 1940 by a small, independent publisher and helped to solidify Ishigaki's place at the forefront of the social work being done at the time. The Feminist Press is now bringing this unique and insightful book back into print.

Ishigaki called *Restless Wave* a "novelistic semi-autobiographical text." As her subtitle suggests, she bridges fiction and non-fiction. She has chosen a set of her own experiences, from her earliest years to just before World War II, and written them from the perspective of Haru Matsui, one of the many pen names she used in her work. In these stories, readers see her evolve from a small girl internalizing rigid Japanese society, to a young woman rebelling and struggling to find her place, to a powerful, independent, compassionate woman committed to changing the world.

Haru's elder sister dreamed of becoming a wife, her younger brother a general. Haru stood between these two and dared to create her own dream. Haru's life eventually leads her down both paths: a general dedicating her life to leading the fight for social justice and peace, and a passionate wife who defies tradition and marries for love. She has extraordinary experiences, from spending time in a detention center because of her political affiliations, surviving an earthquake that took the lives of thousands of Japanese, and breaking away from her family to create a life of her own in a foreign country.

The afterword, written by Yi-Chun Tricia Lin, associate professor of English and cochair of the Women's Studies Project Committee at Borough of Manhattan Community College,

CUNY and Greg Robinson, assistant professor of history at l'Université du Québec à Montréal, succinctly puts Ishigaki's life into historical and sociological perspective. They provide a framework around which to understand the author's rebellion, and a brief glimpse of the rest of her inspiring life.

In this measured and beautiful prose, Ishigaki invites the reader to witness the challenging and layered world of a remarkable Japanese immigrant in the first half of the twentieth century.

Kim Schmidt