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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ WOMEN'S STUDIES

Tribe of Women: A Photojournalist Chronicles the Lives of Her Sisters around the Globe

Connie Bickman
New World Library (May 10, 2001)
Unknown $24.95 (160pp)
978-1-57731-130-0

Words surround color photographs, singing and dancing a journey around the world. In twenty-five chapters detailing encounters with women, from Australia to Tobago to the United States of America, Bickman imparts the peace and wisdom she from gained women of every race, nation, and belief. Readers will share in the personal growth that unfolds with each story, from this recipient of regional and international awards for photography and writing.

In a compelling style, she conveys thoughts and feelings, and offers famous quotations that illustrate her stories. Imagine soaking in the sunlight that pierces the dense forest along the Amazon River. Suddenly a buzzing noise grows louder all around. A heavy cloud of black bees swarms. Be aloof to the danger. What thoughts enter the mind? Would quietness be possible? Her sidebar quotation is from Eleanor Roosevelt: “You must do the things you think you cannot do.” On Bickman’s jungle trip in Peru, she passed this test of woman and nature. Following the instructions of her shaman and guide, she remained quiet, and the swarming bees flew away. Bickman returned to her journaling as if nothing had happened.

“Turkey 1991—Behind the Veil,” in its brevity of eight paragraphs, communicates the strength of women in submissive roles in Third World countries. “Draped women in Turkey usually flee or turn their heads away so photographs can’t be made. But she faced me, like a dead-end alley. She wanted—challenged—me to make a picture.”

The conversations reveal hope, pain, concern, struggle and a longing to communicate despite language barriers. In “Russia 1990—Peace Is a Verb,” Bickman describes an “an exchange of souls that needed no voice,” conducted with few words: “She looked at me curiously for a long time… ‘I’m American, visiting Russia to photograph’… Silence. I continued to smile at her. Then slowly the curves of her mouth graduated into a glorious smile filled with crooked, gold teeth.”

When Bickman listened to her inner voice and discovered her “road to adventure,” her travels led her to weave stories of women in various cultures. Her firsthand experiences, the splendid color photographs, and her sidebar quotations combine to illuminate the importance of honoring and respecting all neighbors everywhere. Tribe of Women will advance anyone’s life journey.

PATRICIA WEBER (June 15, 2001)

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