

Wait for God to Notice

Sari Fordham

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Sari Fordham grew up in the Seventh Day Adventist Church as the child of missionaries; her poetic memoir *Wait for God to Notice* is about her childhood experiences in Uganda, during Idi Amin's 1970s reign of terror.

The second child of an American father and a Finnish mother, Fordham moved with her family to a country that was known to be dangerous, though she was too young to know that at the time. Her childhood was at once idyllic and fraught with danger. She writes about her mother, who she both knew and did not know; about how faith was the undercurrent of her family's life; and about adapting to the unfamiliar and unforgiving environment.

With humor and candor, Fordham discusses the political situation in Uganda and the nuances of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Scenes cover her mother's neverending battle with tomato-stealing monkeys, the constant lookout for snakes, a viper in the laundry basket, and swarms of driver ants. The family also dealt with their inability to find basic items like soap, an overabundance of finger bananas, and a frightening visit from a soldier. Still, though they were out of their element, they came to view Uganda as home.

The memoir also has a cathartic element, as Fordham seeks to understand her mother and all of her complexities. Letters from her parents to her grandparents are incorporated; from these pieces, Fordham constructs new understandings of her parents, and of the country that became lodged in her psyche and in her heart.

Its language melodic, *Wait for God to Notice* is a compelling memoir. This ode to a childhood spent in a foreign country doubles as a exploration of, and reconciliation within, an intricate mother-daughter relationship.

HILARY DANINHIRSCH (May / June 2021)

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