

How to Write a Suicide Note: serial essays that saved a woman's life

Sherry Quan Lee

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Reviewed by Paige Lovitt for Reader Views (6/08)

"How to Write a Suicide Note," is the second book in the Reflections of America Series. The author Sherry Quan Lee took six years to complete her story. The book consists of a series of poignant essays. Ms. Lee is a Chinese/Black woman. Her father was Chinese and her mother was Black. She developed an identity crisis because she was told to pass herself off as white and if she couldn't do that then she should say she is Chinese. This was to help her be better accepted into society. How sad that was because her Chinese father left the family when she was five, so she wasn't raised as a part of his culture. Her strong mother, who was left to raise five children by herself, did not want her to accept the Black side of her culture. I felt this must have been very damaging because her mother deserved to have her culture acknowledged by her children. This taught Ms. Lee to feel invisible.

She writes that her attempts at suicide were cries to be heard. It also seemed like she was making the attempts to kill parts of herself. If Lee really wanted to die, she would have been successful in at least one of her four to six attempts. When she started writing, she discovered that writing saves lives. It was healing for her to tell her story through her poetry. It is also healing for the people who read Lee's works. The people that can relate to her experiences will find healing in knowing that they are not alone.

"How to Write a Suicide Note" is an excellent reading choice for readers, especially women with multicultural backgrounds. I have friends of multicultural backgrounds who had difficulties with their upbringings and how they were accepted by others. Sometimes they felt unaccepted by anybody. One of them, a woman in her 30s, relates that even today she is not sure what box to check under "race." I think that she will really be able to relate to Ms. Lee's story. I also think that women of all races will find the essays moving. No matter what, we all want the same thing that Ms. Lee did, at our core; that is to be loved and accepted.