



But Still, Like Air, I'll Rise: New Asian American Plays

Velina Hasu Houston

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In this pathbreaking volume, Velina Hasu Houston gathers together eleven plays that speak in the "hybridized, unique American voices of Asian descent - and often dissent." These writers resist the bigotry that attempts to target them solely as people of color as well as the homogenizing tendencies of a multiculturalism that fails to recognize the varied make-up of Asian-America. Anthologized for the first time, these plays testify to the rich complexity of Asian-American experience while they also demonstrate the different styles and thematic concerns of the individual playwrights. What are Asian-American plays about? Family conflicts, sexuality, social upheaval, betrayal ...the stuff of all drama. Whether the characters are a middle-aged Taiwanese woman who is married to an Irish American and who dreams of opening a Chinese restaurant, a Chinese-American female bond trader trying to survive a corporate takeover, or an ABC (American Born Chinese) gay man whose lover has AIDS, their Asian-ness is only a part of their story. As a playwright, Houston is keenly aware of the rigid formulas that often exclude writers of color and women writers from mainstream theater. *But Still, Like Air, I'll Rise* brings forth vibrant new work that challenges producers and audiences to broaden their expectations, to attend to the unfamiliar voices that express the universal and particular vision of Asian-American playwrights. Author note: Velina Hasu Houston is Associate Professor and Director of the Playwriting Program in the School of Theatre at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. She is also an award-winning playwright, screenwriter, essayist, and poet. Her work has been presented internationally at such venues as the Manhattan Theatre Club, Old Globe Theatre, A Contemporary Theatre, Syracuse Stage, Smithsonian Institute, Kennedy Center, and Japan Society. She has written for film and television and her plays and critical essays are published in several anthologies. Her first anthology for Temple was *The Politics of Life: Four Plays by Asian-American Women*.

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