

Missing Alice: In Search of a Mother's Voice (Writing American Women)

Susan Letzler Cole

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Missing Alice: In Search of a Mother's Voice (Writing American Women) Susan Letzler Cole Author Susan Letzler Cole lost her mother, Alice, to colon cancer in 1990. Alice was 78. In this extraordinary journal, Cole explores the ties that bind mothers and daughters: in life, facing death, and during bereavement. The author aptly calls her work "an experimental memoir, the autobiography of two voices." Here dialogues with her mother, live and late, are spoken in different voices, styles and media, and at divers moments in time.

Correspondence and conversation, real and imagined, allow Cole to defy boundaries between child and parent, and the living and the dead. Shunning linear narrative, she favors four literary vantage points: Letters written to her mother three years after Alice died; oral history via taped conversations between mother and daughter during Alice's illness; excerpted diary entries by the 14-year-old Alice (in 1926) juxtaposed with the author's adolescent writings. Finally, Cole's own diary entries (1997) contemplate vital themes of love, time.and loss. Unusual technique and heartfelt subject matter make this book a fine choice for studies in biography, autobiography, and women's writings, as well as American Jewish and immigrant experiences, oral history/memoir, and grief therapy.



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