



Writing With An Accent: Contemporary Italian American Women Authors

Edvige Giunta

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Mary Cappello, Louise DeSalvo, Sandra M. Gilbert, Maria Mazziotti Gillan, Carole Maso, Agnes Rossi. These are some of the best-known Italian American writers today. They are part of a literary tradition with mid-twentieth century roots that began to develop, in earnest, in the late 1970s and early 1980s. During those decades, a number of Italian American women, such as Helen Barolini, began to publish books that depicted their perspectives on life through the critical lenses of gender, class, and ethnicity. At the end of the twentieth century, this literature finally blossomed into a fully fledged cultural movement that also took into account issues of sexuality, age, illness, and familial and societal abuse. *Writing with an Accent* takes a look at this vibrant literary movement by discussing those first writers of the 1970s and 1980s as well as later authors. At the center of Edvige Giunta's *Writing with an Accent* is the literal notion of accent, the marker of linguistic and cultural difference that separates and identifies recent immigrants to the United States. In this study, an accent symbolically embodies the differences and creative strategies through which contemporary Italian American women writers engage Italian American culture in works of fiction, poetry, and memoir. Giunta also looks at the links between the literature and art, music, film, and video produced by contemporary Italian American women. The literature of the Italian American women in *Writing with an Accent* is shaped by the complicated connections these authors maintain with their cultural origins, but also, and perhaps more importantly, by their feminist consciousness and politicized sense of ethnic identity. *Writing with an Accent* celebrates and explores a group of authors who characteristically mix the joy and pain of Italian American life to paint a multifaceted picture of Italian American women and their complex place in U.S. culture.

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