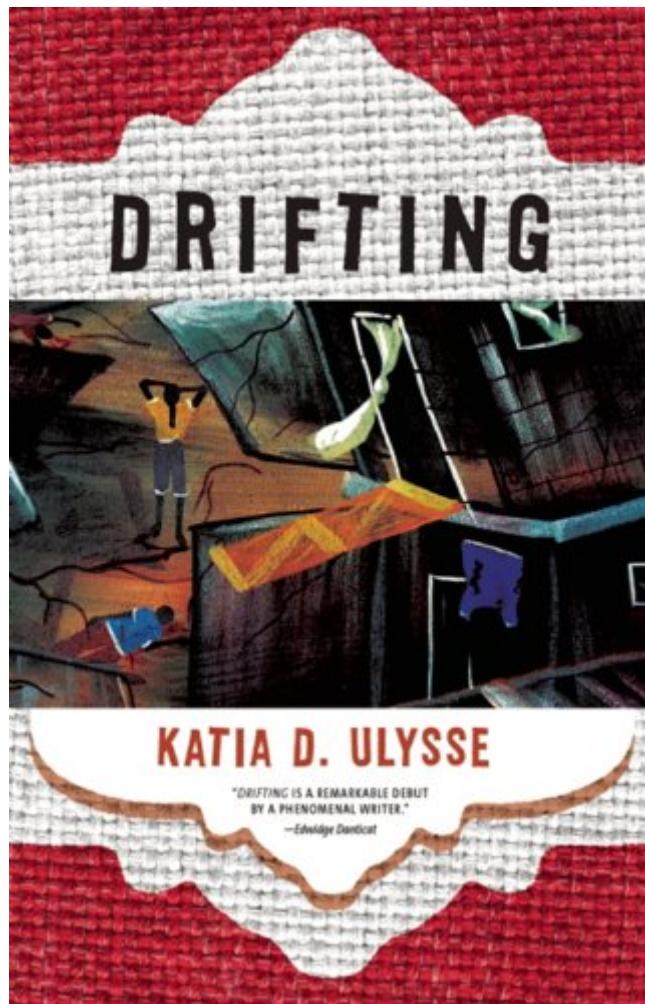


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Drifting



Synopsis

"An arresting account of the contemporary Haitian-American experience."--Publishers Weekly "This novel in short stories will appeal to readers of literary and Caribbean fiction."--Library Journal "Ulysse displaces and redeems her characters with formidable skill, while her precise cuts through all preconceptions....Intense and necessary."--Booklist "Humanity is lost and found in these stories...Ulysse has created a fascinating world of class and cultural distinctions; her stories are engaging."--Kirkus Reviews "Assimilating qualities of Danticat and Alvarez, Ulysse paints a variegated literary tableau, more sociological than psychological or historical, that translates into fiction the reality, as well as the fragility and vivacity, of life for young Haitian American women of few means."--World Literature Today "A superb novel in the form of interconnected short stories that follow Haitian families as they move between time and place, before and after the devastating earthquake of 2010."--Teaching Tolerance Magazine, Summer 2015 Staff Pick "Powerful, piercing and unforgiving...Drifting transcends escapism, materialism and gaudy promises...Ulysse's prosaic brilliance is unmistakable."--Kaieteur News (Guyana) "Captivating and honest....This novel is a win-win for anyone who enjoys character development just as much as plot."--The Review Lab, Columbia College Chicago "Drifting is an intoxicating account of various short stories by Haitian novelist and literary genius Katia D. Ulysse...highly recommended."--Black Star News "Ulysse paints a vivid picture of customs, culture, and experiences. And like the characters, readers are engulfed in a vast array of emotions."--OOSA Online Book Club "A good, worthwhile read."--Book Lust "Katia D. Ulysse has written an engaging debut novel, Drifting....Drawing on rural Haiti, the class system, Vodou and folklore, Ulysse shows how immigrating to the US, while often seen as the only real option, does not always retain or strengthen families or improve one's economic station."--The World is Robert Katia D. Ulysse's debut provides the rare opportunity to peer into the private lives of four secretive Haitian families. The interwoven narrative spans four decades--from 1970 through 2010--and drifts among various provinces in Haiti, the United States, churches, vodun temples, schools, strip clubs, and the grave. Ulysse introduces us to a childless Haitian American couple risking it all for a baby to call their own; a Florida-based predatory schoolteacher threatening students with deportation if they expose him; and the unforgettable Monsieur Boursicault, whose chain of funeral parlors makes him the wealthiest man in Haiti. This daring work of fiction is a departure from the standard narrative of political unrest on the island. Ulysse's characters are everyday people whose hopes for distant success are constantly challenged--but never totally swayed--by the hard realities accompanying the immigrant's journey.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A powerful book in which the characters hopes and dreams somehow get intertwined with your own as you get lost in the prose. I am looking forward to her next novel

The collection of stories in DRIFTING is interwoven by the common theme of :Loss. People drifted from Haiti in search of something better only to find hardship, heartache and that life is not always greener on the other side. Flora, Yseult and Sagesse represent many young Haitian girls who get abused in Haiti and abroad because they are easy prey. They scream in silence. They became homeless with one foot on both soils feeling the tear in their middle. Even the Haitians who stay in Haiti drifted into the river voicelessly. They drifted out of the lives of the family and friends who have left them behind when the big plane took them to yonder. The book addresses issues of loss, regret, and pain. This novel depicts the hardship experienced by Haitians and immigrants during the period of assimilation into a new culture. That feeling of living a double life and the longing and guilt of abandoning the motherland may fade over time but it remains at the core of your new self. Drifting took me back to my own journey from Haiti many, many years ago. Katia's voice is luring.

DRIFTING left me wanting more from my favorite characters, but it allowed me to divine perhaps a happier end than the horror one could imagine of what happened for example to Flora...I'd recommend the book and looking forward to more.

Katia Ulysse's DRIFTING is a collection of related stories that float through her novel like half-told tales. The reader is seduced by certain characters who never reappear to tell the end of their story, leaving a mysterious void and an opportunity for the reader to imagine an ending for their lives. Ulysse's work shows the influence of other Haitian and West Indian writers. Edwidge Danticat, Julia Alvarez, and Jamaica Kincaid seem to hover in the background of certain chapters, showing that Ulysee, while unique and talented, is certainly influenced in her writing life, albeit by very good writers. Some chapters are tantalizingly strong and full of suspense, but they end too suddenly and the reader moves on to the next tale feeling a bit let down that certain characters and stories were left adrift. The work is inconsistent in places, with not every chapter and every character holding the same weight. Ulysee's strength is in her girl characters, particularly Flora and Yseult, childhood friends in Haiti who both hope to reunite in America someday. It is the poignant, believable writing about girls such as these that hold the reader to the page hoping for more storyline, more linkage between characters. But, in Ulysee's book, characters come and go, related in interesting ways between the old world and the new. Still, the reader yearns for more resolution. If one is driven to find out "what happened?" DRIFTING may not provide the satisfaction of a more traditional novel. Still, there is plenty to like in Ulysee's pages. Although she has published a children's book, DRIFTING is Ulysee's first book for adults. It will be well received as it is well-written and it tells the Haitian and Haitian-American experience as well as any living Haitian writer. Enjoy the stories, get lost in the tales, but remember that the book is called DRIFTING, and don't be upset if, while reading, the feeling comes across that the reader is drifting a bit too.

As the title suggests, Katia D. Ulysse's group of tales drift from Haiti to New York and back again. She gives voice to a rhythm that is Haitian in nature. Her story telling is gentle while her subject is harsh. The stories in this book are separate yet weave together. Ms. Ulysse gives the reader an insight to what it means to leave all that one has known and travel to the unknown. She also touches on the sense of loss and homesickness experienced by many immigrants. For the Haitian immigrants opportunities are so much better away from all one is familiar with, but how does one not feel a sense of loss of "home". The story includes characters who choose to stay in Haiti and the realization that when a family member leaves, they may never see them again. Loss on both

sides....yet opportunity for the future. This is not a big book but it covers a lot of ground, I liked it....I liked it a lot, perhaps mostly because of the "voice" of the author. That voice never gives up hope while managing to tell of the struggles of a people, struggles most of us can not imagine. But, isn't that what story tellers do ? They open the mind and after their tale we see things differently, more clearly or perhaps we give it more thought. Katia D. Ulysse does it beautifully. Great debut by a new voice, a voice with a style of it's own.

I won this book for review from Librarything and the main thing I have to say about this arrangement is that it gives me the opportunity to read authors I've never heard of and discover voices that sing in my heart. This is another fine example. Ulysse provides several interwoven stories that bring all the flavor, love and heartbreak of living in Haiti under the harshest of conditions and splashes them about in their new world haven, the U.S.A., where sometimes what you work so hard to achieve can often turn into a nightmare of broken dreams. She gives us insights into a world I'd never have the opportunity or ability to fully realize otherwise. I cannot step into her protagonists' shoes but their thoughts, regrets, loss and best of all, their jumping off points teach of a beautiful people trapped in abject poverty without losing their self-respect and historical backgrounds. The characters are vivid, the scenery screams of paradise and the lives reflect every human's desire to be more than a stereotype. Well done, Katia. Well done.

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