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## Review of *Women Writing Women: The Frontiers Reader* Edited by Patricia Hart and Karen Weathermon, with Susan H. Armitage

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*Women Writing Women: The Frontiers Reader.* Edited by Patricia Hart and Karen Weathermon, with Susan H. Armitage. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006. ix + 277 pp. Notes, appendix, index. \$39.95 paper.

The essays collected in *Women Writing Women: The Frontiers Reader* weave together theoretical, personal, and material frameworks feminist scholars use to write about their lives and the lives of other women. The essays, organized centrifugally ("Writing the Self" to "Writing Women from a Distance"), were selected by the editors from essays published originally in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*. Like the journal, *Women Writing Women* is multidisciplinary, theoretically informed, and, above all, grounded in the lived experiences of diverse women. Explaining the cohesiveness of the anthology in their introduction, editors Hart, Weathermon, and Armitage insist that the "diversity of women's experience cannot be overstated, and it is to this splendid and complex reality that this collection is selected and dedicated." "Splendid and complex" also describes the tone of the anthology: the essays are largely beautifully written and clearly argued. In moving prose, contributors persistently exemplify the joyous peril of writing about women, and in so doing urge the reader to consider her footing at various personal, theoretical, and political crossroads.

The Great Plains scholar will find pointed examinations of identity, gender, and social realities in a regional context: economic dependence in small-town Idaho; Cherokee family history in Oklahoma; relationships between truth and memory in a western mining community; women's migration, immigration, and diaspora in the West; and poignant evocations of mothering, writing, and laboring throughout the region. What emerges, however, is not a traditional interrogation of how region affects identity, but rather an investigation

of how global feminism can serve to uncover the complex relationship between social/physical space and women's lives. In "Weave and Mend," for example, contributor Joanne B. Mulcahy relates how underclass Irish women use storytelling to come to authority and challenge "official" history—much the same way Great Plains women have added their voices to the public record of the American frontier. Nancy Reincke details the relationship between her working-class Idaho mother, Filipina maids abroad, and her own academic labor in her essay "It Takes a Global Village to Raise Consciousness." Reincke demonstrates her discovery of "the relations that tie us all together in global networks of interdependence." Valerie Grim's "From the Yazoo Mississippi Delta to the Urban Communities of the Midwest" uses African American women's oral histories to detail black women's experiences of migration and change.

How do we know what we know about women's lives? And how do we, in turn, write about this knowledge? *Women Writing Women* addresses both epistemological questions, and thus is suitable for women's studies courses and composition courses. Moreover, it engages the reader the way a compelling autobiography does, by forging connections among diverse lives.

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