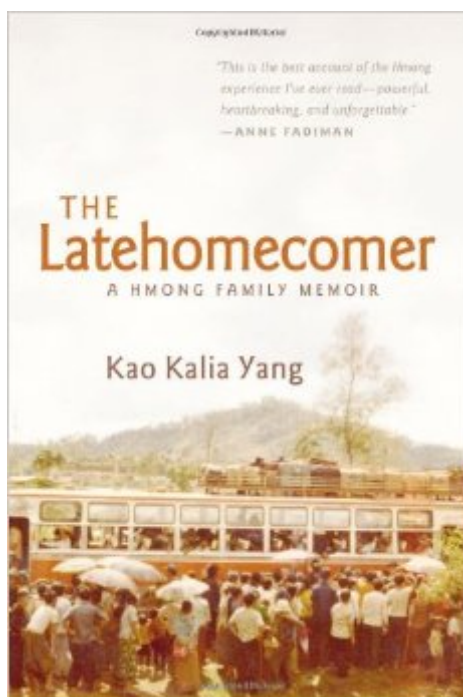


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The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir



Synopsis

In search of a place to call home, thousands of Hmong families made the journey from the war-torn jungles of Laos to the overcrowded refugee camps of Thailand and onward to America. But lacking a written language of their own, the Hmong experience has been primarily recorded by others. Driven to tell her family's story after her grandmother's death, *The Latecomer* is Kao Kalia Yang's tribute to the remarkable woman whose spirit held them all together. It is also an eloquent, firsthand account of a people who have worked hard to make their voices heard. Beginning in the 1970s, as the Hmong were being massacred for their collaboration with the United States during the Vietnam War, Yang recounts the harrowing story of her family's captivity, the daring rescue undertaken by her father and uncles, and their narrow escape into Thailand where Yang was born in the Ban Vinai Refugee Camp. When she was six years old, Yang's family immigrated to America, and she evocatively captures the challenges of adapting to a new place and a new language. Through her words, the dreams, wisdom, and traditions passed down from her grandmother and shared by an entire community have finally found a voice. Together with her sister, Kao Kalia Yang is the founder of a company dedicated to helping immigrants with writing, translating, and business services. A graduate of Carleton College and Columbia University, Yang has recently screened *The Place Where We Were Born*, a film documenting the experiences of Hmong American refugees. Visit her website at www.kaokaliayang.com.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

So I really loved *The Latehomecomer*, more than I thought I would in fact. I was really captivated by the author's tone. I love the lyrical quality of it - it seems to me she is telling us the story of her family in the same ways that her relatives probably told each other verbally. I was also just amazed with the story of the Hmong. I could've used some more background and facts, but I suppose that's not what the book is about and the reader can always do their own research on such things. One thing that I did find myself discontent with was that we sort of lost the thoughts and feelings of the parents once the narration started coming from Kao Kalia Yang. I like how in the beginning, she included the thoughts and trials of her parents, and I found the growing love story there to be one of the most fascinating parts of the book. Then, however, once Yang was old enough the narration begun from her point of view, and we never really were able to get inside the parents heads again. I know she must have interviewed them about the things that happened before she was born, in order to write the story. I wish she would have continued with this tactic, maybe intertwining it with her own experiences as the book went on. I desired the thoughts and feelings of the parents especially when the son was born, I wish I could've had their side of the story, in addition to Yang's, there in particular. I do think it's kind of odd that the author concentrates so much on making it clear she's telling her grandmother's story, because up until the last part, it seems more her story. I don't mind the change, but it's interesting. I guess it does span the grandmother's life, not hers.

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