



A Sunday in Ordinary Time

Mary Ann Grossman

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In a sleepy Italian hill town, around 1850, a young family awakes one morning to find a newborn baby girl on their doorstep. She is dressed richly, swaddled with care and sleeps peacefully in the little basket that serves as her bed. A downy patch of red hairs peeks through her lace bonnet. The family, without discussion, takes the baby in and raises her as their own. That baby was my maternal great-great-grandmother. She would be the oldest member of the Giordano family to immigrate to the United States in 1917. Over five generations, my memoir traces a family's life from the hills of Umbria to the mountains of western Pennsylvania; from Montreal's glistening snow and skyscrapers to New York's vibrancy, tragedy and continual renewal. Inspired in part by "An American Childhood," Annie Dillard's lyrical autobiography set in Pittsburgh, my memoir tells of a sheltered childhood rooted in family and small town tradition and a coming of age challenged by the inevitable forces of change. Above all, it is the story of the ultimate survival and strengthening of those family bonds that are both primal and liberating.

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