

## **Stand a Little Out of My Sun: a novel of forgiveness and redemption**

### **Angelyn Christy Voss**

Visual artist Voss's moving debut novel portrays an immigrant family's struggles and triumphs with the same warmth and emotional depth that resonate in her paintings. The story centers around 12-year-old Sophie Peters, who lives with her parents and brother in the East Side neighborhood of Chicago in the 1950s. Sophie loves her mother's big Greek family, especially her Yiayia Sophia and Papou George, but her father calls them "nosy and ignorant." Her parents fight often, and Sophie worries that her father is a bad influence on her sensitive, empathetic younger brother Niko. When her father's actions throw her family into turmoil, Sophie must summon the courage to cope.

Sophie is a perceptive, audacious heroine, and readers will admire her deep devotion to her family. Her mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother's stories are all woven into Sophie's, offering a multi-faceted look at the family's journey to America. Anecdotes about life with her Greek family—visits to Lake Michigan and the Field Museum, road trips to Detroit in her grandparents' Oldsmobile, family scandals, and funny memories—bring the Poulos clan to life. Although Sophie and her family face outside dangers and challenges, their complex but profound ties are the heart of the novel, and Voss's writing shines when it focuses on these relationships.

This intergenerational story spans eras and locations, but it transitions between them with smooth clarity. Voss immerses readers in settings from Tripoli, to a WWII women's army barracks in Virginia, to a Chicago where alive with possibility but also where "the numbing cold and steely skies [transform] Sophie's raw, anger-driven sorrow into a dull ache." Sophie's Greek heritage is likewise finely detailed, with Greek food, rituals, and phrases incorporated throughout the story. But while these particulars will transport readers, universal themes of loss, forgiveness, and redemption will speak to their hearts. Voss's gentle, compelling family drama offers a clear-eyed appreciation for our heritage and how it shapes us.

**Takeaway:** This uplifting 1950s coming-of-age saga demonstrates how courage, compassion, and faith can overcome emotional adversity.

**Great for fans of:** Pam Records's *Tied With Twine*, Min Jin Lee's *Pachinko*.

### **Production grades**

Cover: **A-**

Design and typography: **A**

Illustrations: **N/A**

Editing: **A-**

Marketing copy: **A**

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