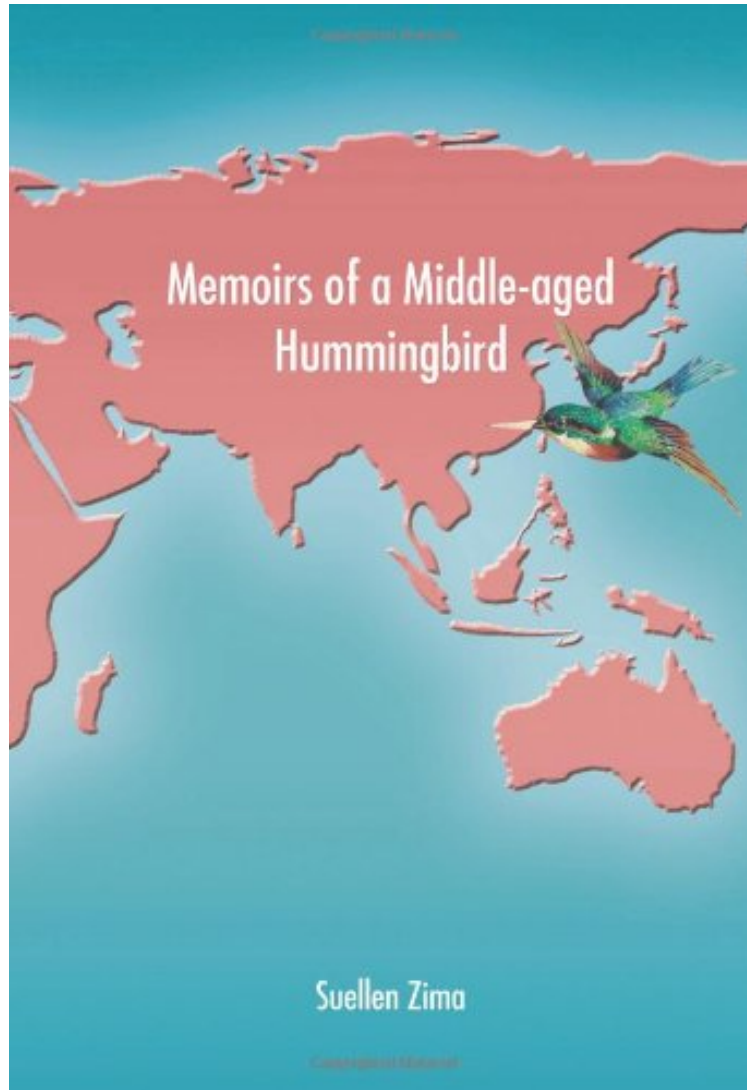


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Memoirs of a Middle-aged Hummingbird

Suellen Zima

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Suellen Zima : Memoirs of a Middle-aged Hummingbird before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Memoirs of a Middle-aged Hummingbird:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Outstanding ReadBy Butterfly Suellen Zima's book, "Memoirs of a Middle-Aged Hummingbird", is one of the most enjoyable reads ever. I traveled right along with her on her exciting adventures. While China and Israel are not my favorite destinations, I can relate to her feelings about a foreign country that feels like "home". I look forward to her blogs updating the information about each country to present time. Suellen is an excellent writer who puts her heart onto every page. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Veers between transparent and opaque, but always interesting By Celia Hayes In 1983 a middle-aged divorced social-worker

emigrated to Israel, and began a twenty-year eccentric odyssey of travel and work in Israel and China, with frequent ventures into Bali, South Korea, Indonesia, New Zealand and Australia. She taught English and traveled widely to all sorts of obscure corners, usually on the economy and accompanied by an assortment of friends. Throughout all this, she kept a diary and wrote letters to her family, telling them of the people and the cultures she met, and her complicated reactions to them. She made close and dear friends among her co-workers and her students in Israel and China; so close and so dear that she regards and writes of many of them as her children, and their children as her grandchildren... and yet, as she admitted and described herself as a hummingbird; "we plant our feet firmly in mid-air, hover, drink deeply and then flit away...if someone tries to hold us, we will die. But we can fly backwards as well as forwards at will." During two tumultuous decades, she hovered in mid-air, sucking up the nectar of a particular place; never staying long enough to be firmly, finally and exclusively committed to any of them, but loving them all and being tormented by various catastrophic events which changed them and affected her friends. This book is described as a memoir, but it is not quite that: it is her diary, letters to family and as such it would have value to anyone writing a social history of any of the places where Ms. Zima lit down for a brief interlude. She has a discerning eye and a gift of describing the passing scene: funky small apartments, the beauty (or lack of same) in places as far apart as Iceland and Bali, the taste in the air, oddities in methods of transportation, interesting people such as the toothless woman working her way around the far corners of the world as a ship's engineer. There is a wealth of observations and experiences in this book, as well as some curious omissions, notably an entry mentioning her sons' presumably terminal illness, about which there is never another word. Since much of it is a personal diary, those entries are a day to day notation of experiences, of names and places with no need for explanation or background, but some of these cry out for expansion, or at least a fuller explanation. A number of long essays sprinkled in among the comparatively terse diary entries hint at the memoir that this book could have been, with a little editing of some parts and a disciplined expansion of others; something along the lines of Patrick Leigh Fermor's "A Time of Gifts" and "Between the Woods and the Water". Very little in this account explains why the author embarked upon this odyssey, the qualifications and other qualities she possessed which enabled her to travel so far afield. As a memoir it is disconcertingly opaque in some aspects, while being perfectly transparent concerning others, especially the ways in which China has changed and developed over the last thirty years, and in one American woman's reaction to those changes.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Sullen Zima: Memoir of a Middle-aged Hummingbird By Gregory R. Lynch REVIEW I was totally captivated by Suellen Zima's book, *Memoirs of a Middle-aged Hummingbird*. Since I have traveled to most of the places where she lived, I could visualize them again through her vivid descriptions. I found her observations and perceptions right on the mark. Best of all I enjoyed the descriptions of her relationships with her students. Since I was a teacher, too, I was very intrigued with the depth and longevity of her attachments to her students. They became her "family". When I started reading such a large book I thought that I might not finish it. To my surprise it held my interest right to the end and beyond. I still want to know "what happened next" to this fascinating woman so I hope she will write another book. AUDRY LYNCH

On this long, unique, extraordinary journey, we join an American middle-aged teacher as she wanders the world. Emigrating to Israel in 1983, she takes us to a boarding school where she cares for newly arrived Ethiopian teenage immigrants. We follow her next to a small Israeli Arab town. In 1988, she takes us back to China as it can never be seen again, and through her students' lives, watches its tumultuous changes from then until 2005. Taiwan, Macau, Bali, and Korea also become "home," while New Zealand, Fiji, Turkey, Vietnam, Russia, and Iceland, among others, beckon briefly, but she always returns to China. Through the enthralling details of the everyday life of ordinary people, the reader virtually lives their struggles, fears, achievements, joys and dreams. Curiosity, intensity, and the journals she keeps along the way are her constant traveling companions. This independent budget traveler keenly experiences cultures, like a hummingbird with feet planted firmly in mid-air, hovering, drinking deeply, and then flitting away to return another day. Interwoven throughout are her personal, emotional, and spiritual journeys. This is a true life odyssey any seasoned or armchair traveler will want to explore.

About the Author Suellen Zima emigrated to Israel in 1983 at the age of 40. A fascinating visit to China in 1988 set her on a nomadic path, teaching in other parts of Asia and returning often to a constantly changing China. She now lives in southern California. Visit <http://www.ZimaTravels.com> and Follow the Senior Hummingbird as she wanders, wonders, and writes.