

Journey Without a Map
Growing Up Italian: A Memoir

DONNA CARUSO

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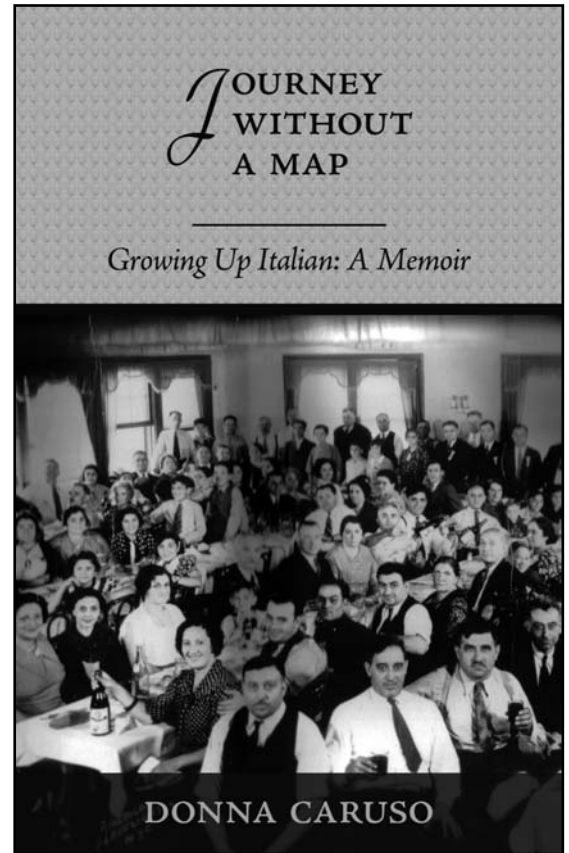
In our increasingly homogenized cultural world what may best nourish us in our needs, shape us in our identities, and be our strength when we are weakest, is our family's heritage and love.

Even as generations pass, the pride of their culture is in the genes of those who were raised in Italian immigrant families. Caruso's *Journey Without a Map* appropriately begins with pasta cooking instructions, and from there the aroma of tomatoes, olives and red wine are never far from the stories she weaves of herself and the impact of her family. Whether making connections between her Uncle Nick's nose and her Roman ancestors, or detailing the daily rituals of her shepherdess mother on the Italian hillsides, Caruso relays the information in broad colourful strokes that are at once both inviting and humorous. With her earliest recollections of her family life in New Jersey, her father's grocery store, her mother's Catholic admonishments, the death of Santa Claus, the family habits and the ever-present smells from the kitchen bring to us her sense of belonging to a rich heritage.

But Caruso's journal and journey are not all feel-good, romanticized Italian immigrant experience. There are those reflections on her mother's life that are as beautiful and intense as they are revealing; the portraits of her extended family members that stand outside the warmth of family love, and the tensions that develop when families are separated by geography and dreams. And though the wisdom of her father and mother guides her through her growing years, it would have to be their remembered love that guides Caruso through her own darkest hours of breast cancer and family break up.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DONNA CARUSO has worked in a variety of arts disciplines since 1980. She has received many awards for her documentary film and video productions, and for screenwriting. Her book of short fiction, *Under Her Skin* was shortlisted for a Saskatchewan Book Award. Donna Caruso lives in Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan.



Memoir



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