

Living in the Taste of Things: Food, Self
and Family in Diana Abu-Jaber's The
Language of Baklava and Leslie Li's
Daughter of Heaven.

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Abstract:

This essay deals with the multilayered trope of food in two autobiographical works published in 2005, Diana Abu-Jaber's *The Language of Baklava* and Leslie Li's *Daughter of Heaven*. Both works are considered "food memoirs" and, as the title indicates, culinary rituals, commensality, recipes, and other food-related matters constitute the backbone of the narratives. Abu-Jaber and Li use food as a vehicle for the exploration of memories of past events, as well as for the analysis of issues such as ethnicity, racism, identity and community. The fact that both works feature first and second generation members in the United States-Arab Americans in the case of Abu-Jaber, and Chinese Americans in the case of Li- invites a comparative study of the two memoirs, which, surprisingly enough, present many stylistic and thematic similarities.

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