

# Dreams of Joy

by Lisa See

## About the Book

In her most powerful novel yet, acclaimed author Lisa See returns to the story of sisters Pearl and May from *Shanghai Girls*, and Pearl's strong-willed nineteen-year-old daughter, Joy. Reeling from newly uncovered family secrets, Joy runs away to Shanghai in early 1957 to find her birth father—the artist Z.G. Li, with whom both May and Pearl were once in love. Dazzled by him, and blinded by idealism and defiance, Joy throws herself into the New Society of Red China, heedless of the dangers in the Communist regime. Devastated by Joy's flight and terrified for her safety, Pearl is determined to save her daughter, no matter the personal cost. From the crowded city to remote villages, Pearl confronts old demons and almost insurmountable challenges as she follows Joy, hoping for reconciliation. Yet even as Joy's and Pearl's separate journeys converge, one of the most tragic episodes in China's history threatens their very lives.

## Praise for the Book

“Once again, See’s research feels impeccable, and she has created an authentic, visually arresting world.”

—*The Washington Post*

“See’s many readers will be pleased to see the continued development of Pearl and May’s relationship. . . . [She] creates an immersive atmosphere.”

—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

“Riveting, meticulously researched.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Astonishing . . . one of those hard-to-put-down-until-four-in-the-morning books . . . a story with characters who enter a reader’s life, take up residence, and illuminate the myriad decisions and stories that make up human history.”

—*Los Angeles Times*

*Courtesy of Random House*

## About the Author

Title: Lisa See

Known As: Kendall, Lisa See; See, Lisa

American Novelist ( 1955 - )

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### PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Born February 18, 1955, in Paris, France; daughter of Richard Edward (an anthropologist) and Carolyn (a novelist) See; married Richard Becker Kendall (an attorney), July 18, 1981; children: Alexander See Kendall, Christopher Copeland Kendall. Education: Received certificate from Institute for Balkan Studies in Greece, 1978; Loyola Marymount University, B.A., 1979. Avocational Interests: Travel (including Mexico and Greece), tennis, Mexican folkloric dance. Memberships: American Society of Journalists and Authors, Writers Guild of America, West, PEN (judge). Addresses: Homeoffice: Pacific Palisades, CA. Agent: Elaine Markson, 44 Greenwich Ave., New York, NY 10011. E-mail: writersee@aol.com.

### CAREER:

Writer. Triad Graphic Workshop, Los Angeles, CA, printer and in sales and public relations, 1973-75; Sun Institute, Los Angeles, event coordinator, 1977-78; freelance writer, 1979--; event coordinator for Loyola Marymount Writers Conference, 1980--. Vice president of Kendall Restaurant Corp.; Los Angeles City Commissioner on the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Monument Authority.

### AWARDS:

Proclamation from City of Los Angeles and Long Beach Literary Hall of Fame Award, both 1983, both for *Lotus Land*; National Woman of the Year, the Organization of Chinese American Women, 2001; History Makers Award, Chinese American Museum, 2003.

## WORKS:

## WRITINGS:

- (Author of text) *A Day in the Life of Hawaii*, Workman Publishing (New York, NY), 1984.
- *On Gold Mountain: The One-hundred-year Odyssey of My Chinese-American Family* (autobiography), St. Martin's Press (New York, NY), 1995.
- *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* (novel), Random House (New York, NY), 2005.
- (As Lisa See) *Peony in Love* (novel), Random House (New York, NY), 2007.
- *Shanghai Girls* (novel), Random House (New York, NY), 2009.

## "HULAN AND STARK" MYSTERY SERIES

- *Flower Net*, HarperCollins (New York, NY), 1997.
- *The Interior*, HarperCollins (New York, NY), 1999.
- *Dragon Bones*, Random House (New York, NY), 2003.

## WITH MOTHER, CAROLYN SEE, AND JOHN ESPEY; UNDER JOINT PSEUDONYM MONICA HIGHLAND

- *Lotus Land* (novel), Coward-McCann (New York, NY), 1983.
- *110 Shanghai Road*, McGraw-Hill (New York, NY), 1986.
- *Greetings from Southern California* (nonfiction), Graphic Arts Center Publishing (Portland, OR), 1988.

Contributor to book *Half + Half*. Contributor of articles to *TV Guide*, *USA Today*, *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, *New West*, *Dynamic Years*, *City Kids*, *Emmy*, *Forum*, *Today*, *Sporting Times*, *Women's Sports*, *LA Weekly*, and *Twin Circle*. Western correspondent for *Publishers Weekly*, 1980--.

## MEDIA ADAPTATIONS:

*Lotus Land* and *110 Shanghai Road* have been optioned for television miniseries. The film *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, adapted from See's novel, was released by Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2011.

## Sidelights

Lisa See, who has published with her mother, Carolyn See, and John Espey under the joint pseudonym Monica Highland, once told *CA*: "I've been around journalism and letters all my life. My mother, Carolyn See, is a journalist, novelist, and critic. She has

taught me everything I know about what might be called the popular, contemporary West Coast literary scene. I've known my other collaborator, John Espey, for over twenty-five years. He has taught me about the scholarly life. It is a pleasure to work with them as 'Monica Highland.' I know I speak for all of us when I say that it gives us a feeling of strength in numbers--something all writers need in the West."

See, one-eighth Chinese, presents more than her own life story in her autobiography *On Gold Mountain: The One-hundred-year Odyssey of My Chinese-American Family*. The narrative is "a comprehensive and exhaustively researched account of a Chinese-American family as it deals with the rise and fall of several Los Angeles 'Chinatowns,' with the exigencies of discrimination, fire, flood, earthquake, the Great Depression and two world wars," summarized Zilpha Keatley Snyder in the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*. "Intricate genealogy, bravura entrepreneurship, bitter adulteries and perdurable rivalries ... business in rambunctious frontier California; ferreting out the heirlooms of abruptly bankrupt Chinese families and buying them up; dealing in art, antiques and furniture; marrying, divorcing and carrying on--the See family's adventures would be incredible if *On Gold Mountain* were fiction," proclaimed Elizabeth Tallent in the *New York Times Book Review*.

The "diversity" in "deal[ing] with a great number of individuals and a time span of over one hundred years ... [and] unique crosscurrents of cultural and ethnic diversity ... sets [See's] saga apart from other excellent family histories of Asian immigrants. ... Throughout the lengthy and complicated account the reader is carried along effortlessly by the author's skillful and absolutely convincing invocation of the fears, joys, loves, hatreds, strengths and weaknesses of her remarkable progenitors," praised Snyder, who superficially faulted the book for not editing some "duplications of information" and for a lack of "family photographs." Tallent cautioned, however, that in the "handling of her characters' emotional lives on occasion [See] seems downright fatigued." Regardless, See, a "clear-eyed biographer," did "a gallant and fair-minded job of fashioning anecdote, fable and fact into an engaging account," recognized Tallent. *On Gold Mountain* is a "lovingly rendered dynastic saga," applauded Pam Lambert in *People*, concluding: "Deeply felt, [See's] story of culture and assimilation would likely make her ancestors proud."

"The complexity of [See's] own background" is credited by Paula Friedman in the *Los Angeles Times Book Review* for "the graceful rendering of two different and complex cultures, within [the] highly intricate plot" of *Flower Net*, a "novel of political conspiracy and family betrayal." See's debut mystery presents "a workman-like job with ... plot and paints a vivid portrait of a vast Communist nation in the painful throes of a sea change," stated a *People* reviewer. Critics applauded See's portrayal of Beijing and characterization of Liu Hulan, a female detective with the Ministry of Public Security in Beijing. Hulan is paired with her love interest of a decade earlier, David Stark, an assistant U.S. attorney. The team bridges countries, and rekindles romance, when investigating an apparent serial killer whose latest two victims were recently discovered. The body of a powerful Chinese businessman's son was found in U.S. territory, and the

body of a U.S. ambassador's son was found frozen in a Beijing lake. "True to [See]'s predilection for doubling throughout this novel, when Hulan and David do reach the end of their investigation, they find two interdependent solutions. One is so sensationally evil, its hard to swallow; the other is quietly appalling," declared *Washington Post Book World* contributor Maureen Corrigan.

"All and all," recognized *New York Times Book Review* contributor Gary Krist, "[ *Flower Net* has] an inviting premise for a thriller ... [and] capitalizes on its inherent novelty and exoticism ... but when it comes to plotting, [See] unfortunately adopts the old policy of letting a hundred improbabilities bloom ... [and there is] a nagging aura of inauthenticity hang[ing] over the novel's investigative mechanics." In the novel, "paradox and contradiction are enmeshed in increasingly ambiguous scenarios that are about as tough to sort out as any 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle. Following the crisscrossing narrative that moves from China to Los Angeles and back again, the reader quickly begins to feel trapped in a hall of mirrors," contended Friedman.

Of the detective pair, Krist wrote: "Although Stark is constructed largely from crime-novel boiler plate ... Hulan is a provocative mixture of vulnerability, bitterness and hardheaded practicality." Calling Hulan an "intriguing, if not fully fleshed out, character," Corrigan asserted: "David may have the muscle, but Hulan has the moxie." With Hulan, declared *USA Today* reviewer Deirdre Donahue, See has "compellingly" created a "woman far more tough-minded than the man." Praising the novel, Corrigan contended that "if ... you have a strong stomach and an appreciation for atmospheric, tightly plotted suspense stories, *Flower Net* is a treat." This "nifty tale of suspense" presents "colorful observations of Chinese life ... seamlessly combined with basic suspense elements," lauded *Chicago Tribune* contributor Chris Petrako, calling See "a writer comfortable with imaginative storytelling and the sweep of history."

*The Interior* is See's second mystery novel featuring American lawyer Stark and Chinese police detective Hulan, published in 1999. This time the lovers set off on a case involving an American-owned toy factory in rural China after Hulan's old friend Ling Suche's daughter dies there. Hulan goes undercover in the factory and uncovers conditions where women are treated like slaves, and possibly even murdered. In See's third mystery novel, 2003's *Dragon Bones*, Hulan and Stark are back at it again. The duo is married now and drifting apart after the death of their young daughter, who contracted meningitis. Hoping to bring the couple back together, Hulan's superior at the Ministry of Public Security sends her and Stark to the Three Gorges to investigate the death of an archaeologist who may have stolen ancient artifacts from the dam site. As they begin to repair their relationship, more fatalities occur. Although *Booklist* reviewer Carrie Bissey criticized the novel for being "wordy" and having dialogue that is "a bit stilted," she also noted that the information about historical and modern-day China conveyed in the novel "makes it worthwhile." She further commended the book for having a plot that "is convoluted but fascinating." The author "succeeds in widening the reader's knowledge about the politics and culture of contemporary China while racing along with an absorbing story," observed a *Publishers Weekly* reviewer. *Library Journal* contributor Nanci Milone Hill mentioned

that *Dragon Bones* "flows beautifully, engaging readers in the mystery while gently introducing them to China's rich cultural history."

Veering away from the mystery genre, See's 2005 novel, *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, takes readers to nineteenth-century China to explore the long-standing friendship between two women, Lily and Snow Flower, who, despite their strikingly different backgrounds, were brought together by the tradition of arranged friendships known as laotong. Over the years, the two exchange messages in nu shu (a secret language known only to women), writing of their mutual devotion on a fan they pass between each other. The laotong bonds of the two persevere through several family tragedies, a typhoid-fever epidemic, and the Taiping Rebellion of 1851-64. But a misunderstood message in nu shu, the secret language that facilitated their bond, in the end, tears their friendship apart. For this book, See traveled to a remote area of China, supposedly only the second foreigner ever to visit there, to research nu shu, the secret writing invented, used, and kept a secret by women for over a thousand years. Her "meticulous research and exquisite language deliver a story that is haunting, powerful, and, at times, almost too painful to bear," remarked Beth E. Andersen in her review of the novel for *Library Journal*. *Booklist* reviewer Kristine Huntley remarked that in this book the author's "writing is intricate and graceful, and her attention to detail never wavers, making for a lush, involving reading experience." "Taut and vibrant, the story offers a delicately painted view of a sequestered world and provides a richly textured account of how women might understand their own lives," lauded a *Kirkus Reviews*, critic.

See's follow-up to *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, 2007's *Peony in Love*, explores the true-life phenomenon of lovesick Chinese maidens. Privileged but repressed, these girls fell under the spell of the romantic opera *The Peony Pavilion* and let themselves waste away in the name of love. The opera, debuting in 1598, tells the story of Liniang, a young woman who meets her true love in a dream and wakes up so lovesick that she dies of a broken heart. Her lover eventually brings her back to life. "These girls were living more or less totally confined lives," said See in an interview with *BookPage* Web site contributor Amy Scribner. "They never met their husbands. A lot of them never went out. They thought that in emulating Liniang, maybe they, too, would have some choice in their lives. Maybe true love would bring them back to life." Set in seventeenth-century China, the book's main character, Peony, meets her soulmate during a forbidden late-night walk on the outskirts of her family villa during a local production of *The Peony Pavilion*. Already promised in marriage, she mourns for her true love by embarking on the same dark path as the opera's heroine. In a cruel twist of fate, Peony discovers as she is dying that the man she met that night and fell in love with is also the man she was supposed to marry. "Peony's vibrant voice, perfectly pitched between the novel's historical and passionate depths, carries her story beautifully--in life and afterlife," observed a *Publishers Weekly* reviewer.

See once told *CA*: "It's a rare day when I don't ponder that the West Coast (especially Southern California, the second-largest book market) isn't adequately represented in the media or seriously considered by the power brokers in the East. There is power, talent,

and money out here, and except for the movie business, little connection is made between the East Coast publishing business and the extraordinary cache of West Coast energy."

#### FURTHER READINGS:

#### FURTHER READINGS ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

#### PERIODICALS

- *Booklist*, September 15, 1999, Jenny McLarin, review of *The Interior*, p. 238; March 15, 2003, Carrie Bissey, review of *Dragon Bones*, p. 1281; July, 2005, Kristine Huntley, review of *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, p. 1901; May 15, 2007, Elizabeth Dickie, review of *Peony in Love*, p. 21.
- *Books*, August 13, 2006, Petra Nelson, review of *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, p. 6; June 2, 2007, Kristin Kloberdanz, review of *Peony in Love*, p. 8; July 21, 2007, "Timeless Love: Lisa See's Historical Novel Transports Readers to Places Real and Otherworldly," p. 9.
- *Book World*, June 26, 2005, "Scripted in the Shadows," p. 6; June 24, 2007, "Ghosts in the Garden," p. 6.
- *Chicago Tribune*, October 12, 1997, Chris Petrako, review of *Flower Net*.
- *Detroit Free Press*, July 6, 2005, review of *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*.
- *Drood Review of Mystery*, July, 2000, review of *The Interior*, p. 21.
- *Entertainment Weekly*, June 24, 2005, Jennifer Reese, review of *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, p. 170.
- *Financial Times*, November 3, 2007, Sarah Beldo, review of *Peony in Love*, p. 43.
- *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, June 27, 2007, review of *Peony in Love*.
- *Houston Chronicle*, July 8, 2007, "Lovesick in 17th-century China; in Lisa See's Romantic, Suspenseful Novel, a Cloistered Girl Falls under the Spell of a Scandalous Opera," p. 14.
- *Kirkus Reviews*, March 15, 2003, review of *Dragon Bones*, p. 425; April 15, 2005, review of *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, p. 447; May 15, 2007, review of *Peony in Love*.
- *Kliatt*, March, 2005, Janet Julian, review of *Dragon Bones*, p. 52.
- *Library Journal*, July 16, 1986, Patricia Altner, review of *110 Shanghai Road*, p. 108; August, 2000, Lora Bruggeman, review of *The Interior*, p. 192; May 15, 2003, Nanci Milone Hill, review of *Dragon Bones*, p. 127; June 1, 2005, Beth E. Andersen, review of *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, p. 122; May 15, 2007, Beth E. Andersen, review of *Peony in Love*, p. 84.
- *Los Angeles Magazine*, May, 1983, Tom Link, review of *Lotus Land*, p. 52; July, 2007, Robert Ito, review of *Peony in Love*, p. 82.
- *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, July 23, 1995, Zilpha Keatley Snyder, review of *On Gold Mountain: The One-hundred-year Odyssey of My Chinese-American Family*; September 28, 1997, Paula Friedman, review of *Flower Net*.

- *New York Times Book Review*, August 27, 1995, Elizabeth Tallent, review of *On Gold Mountain*; October 26, 1997, Gary Krist, review of *Flower Net*, p. 14; July 22, 2007, "Dead Flowers," p. 20.
- *People*, November 20, 1995, Pam Lambert, review of *On Gold Mountain*, p. 32; November 3, 1997, review of *Flower Net*, p. 38.
- *Publishers Weekly*, May 30, 1986, Sybil Steinberg, review of *110 Shanghai Road*, p. 53; August 9, 1999, review of *The Interior*, p. 338; March 24, 2003, review of *Dragon Bones*, p. 55; April 18, 2005, review of *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, p. 40; April 23, 2007, review of *Peony in Love*, p. 27.
- *School Library Journal*, October, 2003, Judy McAloon, review of *Dragon Bones*, p. 208; September, 2005, Molly Connally, review of *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, p. 245.
- *USA Today*, October 30, 1997, Deirdre Donahue, review of *Flower Net*; July 14, 2005, Susan Kelly, review of *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, p. 7; July 3, 2007, review of *Peony in Love*, p. 7.
- *Virginia Quarterly Review*, fall, 2005, Tiffany N. Gilbert, review of *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*.
- *Washington Post Book World*, September 21, 1997, Maureen Corrigan, review of *Flower Net*; June 26, 2007, "Book World Live; a Young Woman in 17th-century China Returns after Death to Fulfill Her Destiny."
- *Weekend Edition Sunday*, July 1, 2007, review of *Peony in Love*.

#### ONLINE

- *BookPage*, <http://www.bookpage.com/> (February 17, 2008), Amy Scribner, "Siren Song."
- *Lisa See Home Page*, <http://www.lisasee.com> (February 17, 2008).
- *Mostly Fiction*, <http://www.mostlyfiction.com/> (September 3, 2007), Amanda Richards, review of *Peony in Love*.\*

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## Author Interview

A reader-requested sequel

Interview by [Stephenie Harrison](#)

From *BookPage.com* June 2011 post

The author of *Shanghai Girls* brings back three of her favorite characters in a new novel set during one of China's darkest periods.

***Dreams of Joy* is a sequel to one of your previous novels, *Shanghai Girls*. What made you decide to revisit that story and its characters?**

I didn't plan to write a sequel. I thought the end of *Shanghai Girls* was a new beginning. Readers thought otherwise. Absolutely everyone, including my publisher, asked for a sequel. I loved spending more time with Pearl, Joy and May. I've now been thinking and writing about them for four years, so I know them really, really well. It was interesting to go even deeper emotionally with all of them.

**This novel offers a vivid picture of the hardships endured by the Chinese people during Mao's Great Leap Forward. How did you conduct your research and what obstacles did you encounter?**

There are a handful of nonfiction books written about the Great Leap Forward, which helped me with the straight facts. When I was in China, I interviewed people in Huangcun Village who had lived through that time. I also talked to younger people in China to see what their impressions were of the Great Leap Forward and what their parents had gone through. The main obstacle I encountered, even with young, educated people, is the belief—after years of education—that the famine that occurred during the Great Leap Forward was caused by “three years of bad weather.”

**All of your books are rooted in fact and real historical events, so why do you choose to write fiction rather than nonfiction?**

What I love about books—as a reader myself—is opening the pages, stepping into another world, connecting to the characters, and by extension to larger things like an historical moment, the human condition, how women were treated and things like that. I'm willing to go on a journey and read about history if there are characters, relationships and emotions I can connect to. It's those things that keep me turning the pages, and along the way I learn a lot. That's what I love in the books I read, and that's what I hope for readers of the books I write.

**Your fiction has opened a new window on China and its people for many American readers. Do you feel that there are any stereotypes about China that continue to persist despite your efforts?**

I actually think people are very confused about China. Is it an economic global superpower or a rigid Communist country known for its human rights violations? Is it one of the most advanced countries in the world in terms of gender equality or is it a place where people give up their daughters for adoption? Is it the country with the third largest

number of millionaires and billionaires in the world or a country of dire poverty? On any given day, any stereotype can be accurate, even in this country.

**The movie version of your novel *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* will premiere this summer. How does it feel to see your characters come to life on the screen?**

It's both wonderful and weird. The parts of the film that are true to the book are absolutely true—lifted word for word from the novel. But I'm sure that many readers of the book will be just as surprised as I was to see a singing and dancing Hugh Jackman.

***Dreams of Joy* makes plenty of references to the Chinese Zodiac: Dogs are likeable, Rabbits are friendly, Dragons are ferocious. Your Chinese zodiac sign is the Sheep; how well do you think you embody your sign?**

A Sheep really loves home. I also love to be at home. It's one of the reasons I became a writer. I can stay at home all day.

**What is the most important thing you have learned about writing from your mother, novelist Carolyn See?**

Her work habits. Write 1,000 words a day, plus one charming note or phone call.

**Your Chinese heritage is obviously very important to you as a writer; are there any other Chinese (or Chinese-American) writers that you feel deserve wider readership?**

I love Ha Jin and Yiyun Li. They're both critically acclaimed, but they haven't had the readership they deserve.

**With bookstores closing and eBooks and self-publishing exploding, the literary world is in a period of rapid change. Are you concerned about what the future holds for books and reading?**

Of course I'm concerned. Who isn't? I love real books, but I also have a Kindle that I use on trips. As soon as I come home, though, I'm back to a real book.

Courtesy of *BookPage.com*, Retrieved January 11, 2012, from <http://bookpage.com/interview/a-reader-requested-sequel>

## Discussion Questions

1. Joy is frequently described in terms of her Tiger astrological sign. In *Dreams of Joy*, where do you see her acting true to her Tiger nature? Where do you see her acting un-Tiger like?
2. Many of us grew up believing that the People's Republic of China was "closed," and that it remained that way until President Nixon "opened" it. Certainly Pearl (and even Joy, to a great extent) go to China with preconceived ideas of what they'll see and experience. In what ways are they right—or wrong?
3. Does seeing the world through Joy's eyes help you to understand Pearl? Similarly, does Pearl give insights into her daughter?
4. The novel's title, *Dreams of Joy*, has many meanings. What does the phrase mean to the different characters in the novel, to Lisa, to the reader?
5. In many ways *Dreams of Joy* is a traditional coming-of-age novel for Joy. Lisa has said that she believes it's also a coming of age novel for Pearl and May. Do you agree? If so, how do these three characters grow up? Do they find their happy endings?
6. Although May plays a key role in *Dreams of Joy*, she is always off stage. How do you feel about this? Would you rather have May be an on-stage figure in this novel?
7. Pearl has some pretty strong views about motherhood. At one point she asks, "What tactic do we, as mothers, use with our children when we know they're going to make, or have already made, a terrible mistake? We accept blame." Later, she observes, "Like all mothers, I needed to hide my sadness, anger, and grief." Do you agree with her? Does her attitude about mothering change during the course of the novel?
8. Joy's initial perception of China is largely a projection of her youthful idealism. What are the key scenes that force her to adjust her beliefs and feelings in this regard?
9. Describe the roles that Tao, Ta-ming, Kumei, and Yong play in *Dreams of Joy*. Why are they so important thematically to the novel?
10. Food—or severe lack of it—are of critical importance in *Dreams of Joy*. How does food affect Joy's growth as a person? Pearl's?
11. Let's consider the men—whether present in the novel as living characters or not—for a moment. What influence do Sam, Z.G., Pearl's father, Dun, and Tao

- have on the story? How do they show men at their best and worst? Are any of these characters completely good—or bad?
12. *Dreams of Joy* is largely a novel about mothers and daughters, but it's also about fathers and daughters. How do Joy's feelings toward Sam and Z.G. change over the course of the novel? Does Pearl's attitude towards her father change in any way?
  13. There are several moments in the novel when people have to choose the moral or ethical thing to do. Where are those places? What purpose do they play? And why do you think Lisa choose to write them?
  14. Z.G. quotes a 17<sup>th</sup>-century artist when he says, "Art is the heartbeat of the artist." How has this idea influenced his life? What impact does this concept have on Joy?
  15. Ultimately, *Dreams of Joy* is about "mother love"—the love Pearl feels for Joy, Joy feels for her mother, Joy experiences with the birth of her daughter, and the on-going struggle between Pearl and May over who is Joy's true mother. In what ways do secrets, disappointments, fear, and overwhelming love affect mother love in the story?

*Courtesy of Random House*