

“Final Touchstones” Review  
By Kris McCormick



Linda Romanowski made it her mission to preserve the tales of her family’s history in her memoir, “Final Touchstones”. The writing moves between time and form, following the travels and developments in her family’s story through poetry and prose, taking readers on the transition of their identities from “*Italian/Italian*” to “*Italian/American*” and finally to “*American/Italians*” (Romanowski). Within her book, she flows between these family members known as “characters” as she tells stories spanning more than one hundred years and five generations, illustrating aspects of her familial identity and traditions.

The strongest and most enduring across all the stories is Romanowski’s voice and narrative enthusiasm. From the earliest stories — set long before she was a twinkle in her parents’ eyes — to observations of her own daughter and grandson, love and intensity shine

through her writing. The pages are saturated with curiosity, passion, and fascination for the world around her. Stories from her earliest years depict the craving and zeal that made her want to be part of it all — part of everything possible! Humble and honest in the extreme, Linda depicts herself and those she loves in the brightest of spotlights and the purest of their low points. She not only counts each precious moment, but also adds them up to this compelling and buoyant familial heirloom that leaves one seeing the wonder and beauty in their lives.

The memoir's strongest uniting aspects are the family members who return throughout the memories as well as the city of Philadelphia itself, home to the most recent five generations. This family's story serves as a love story to so much more than just her relatives but to the city of Philadelphia and several of her neighborhoods, traditions from worlds old and new, friends old and new across time and space, food and wine that bring life to their lives, and to life through the good, the bad, the in-betweens, and every part of the process along the way.



Kris McCormick is a Philadelphia native, a freelance book editor and coach, and a current double-degree student in the Rosemont College Graduate Publishing and Creative Writing program. She serves as the current graduate assistant to the director and as a reader for the *Philadelphia Stories* Marguerite McGlinn Prize for Fiction contest. When not studying or working (a rarity), she holes up at home to read way too many books and work on needlecraft to her old-lady heart's content.



Linda M. Romanowski graduated from Rosemont College with an MFA in Creative Writing in 2021. Her thesis, her hybrid Italian memoir, *Final Touchstones*, has been published by Sunbury Press. Her non-fiction and poetry publications include *The City Key*, *the Marion Lanza* Institute Facebook page and website, *Moonstone Arts*, *Ovunque Siamo*, and *Vine Leaves Press*.