Marcy Alancraig has created a wondrous story that focuses on the relationship between Shoshona and her grandmother Rheabie Slominski, as Rheabie reveals the "truth" of what happened to their family in 1920s Petaluma, California, where she and Shoshona's grandfather were part of a large left-wing community of Jewish chicken ranchers. When Rheabie falls ill and her daughter asks Shoshona to move in with her grandmother, Shoshana struggles to believe her grandmother's tales, which are in conflict with her mother's lifelong aversion to and dismissal of "such nonsense". “But probably you know already, dolly, that in this life we are not always given the expected stories,” Rheabie tells Shoshona, revealing that the family was haunted by relatives killed in a pogrom during the 1917 revolution in Russia.

The Yiddish sprinkled throughout and the sentence structure of Rheabie Slominski's speech is superb. Her cadence comes naturally, as do the other characters, which are interspersed in both the present and the past. Rheabie's "stories" makes one feel as if you are a close family member or young child, who has snuggled up with your Nana on the front porch and cannot wait to find out what happens next.

As she discovers her own abilities to see ghosts and the "Guardians of the land", Shoshana also uncovers deeper family secrets about alcoholism, adultery, sexual orientation, and friendship. Slowly, Shoshana tries to heal what has been revealed, and make real connections with people in her past, and present. Shoshana's questioning of her own sexual preference, are subtly interwoven throughout, as she keeps unexpectedly "running into" a woman her grandmother calls "That hippie, flower-child lady".

*A Woman of Heart* has well-rounded and complex characters with which one can identify and make their own. As the story progresses, you care about what has, is and will happen.
to each and every one in it. This is a tale, which readily falls into a number of genres (family, historical, Jewish, contemporary, literary, environmental and/or lesbian fiction), yet stands on its own without being labeled or categorized. The sounds of Toni Morrison, Tillie Olson, Isabel Allende, Amy Tan, and Anita Diamant can be heard whispering in the author's ear. It is not a stretch, by any means, to say that Alancraig has written a work on par with some of the greatest writers of our time.