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Wandering in the DMZ

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Immigrants from Korea encountering Western culture for the first time in the 1960s experienced a monumental clash that could take years to overcome. Their childhoods spanned the final days of World War II, the Korean War, and the postwar chaos. In Korea, an ancient code of conduct prevailed. A boy could not even hold a girl's hand, and kissing was regarded as lewd. But in the United States, everything was different, leaving Korean Americans trapped in a cultural demilitarized zone. In Wandering in the DMZ, author Kenneth K. Suh presents a series of stories exploring these conflicts. He includes a variety of short fiction, nonfiction essays, and personal stories, all touching on the intersection between Korean and Western cultural expectations. In "Color-Blind," Suzy and Jay, who immigrated to the United States in the 1960s, find themselves in love but unable to move forward due to social awkwardness and expectations. Over the years, they gradually find their way toward each other, maneuvering around obstacles and quirks to get there. Other stories share Suh's memories of Korea in the 1950s, as the fighting between North and South Korea began, as well as essays exploring recent events, such as the Boston Marathon bombing. Offering a glimpse into a unique cultural blend, this collection presents fiction and nonfiction narratives exploring the conflicts that the Korean immigrants experienced in the United States.

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