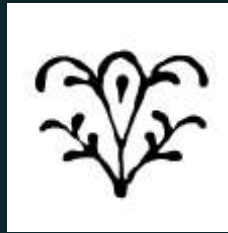
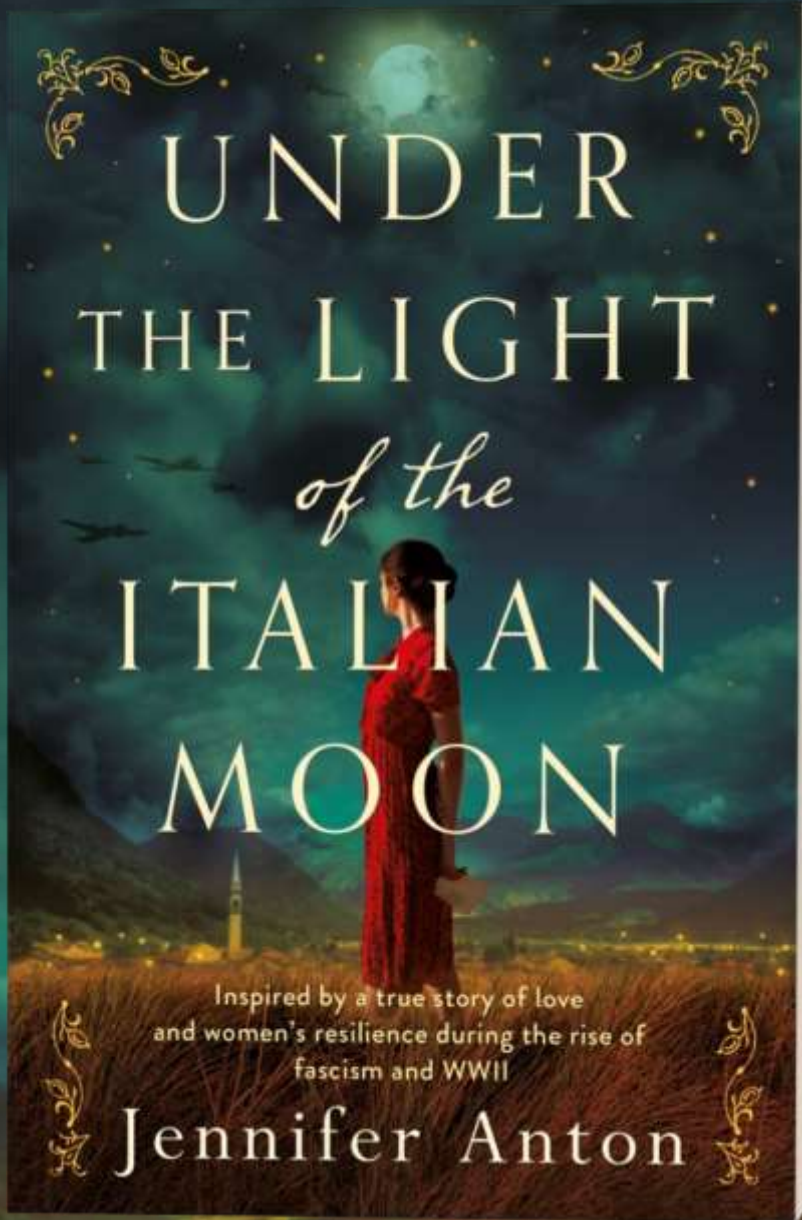


Book Club Discussion Guide



Jennifer Anton





'An enthralling, richly crafted story of bold women resisting destruction, death and fascism.'

– Robin Pickering-Iazzi, Professor of Italian and Comparative Literature, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

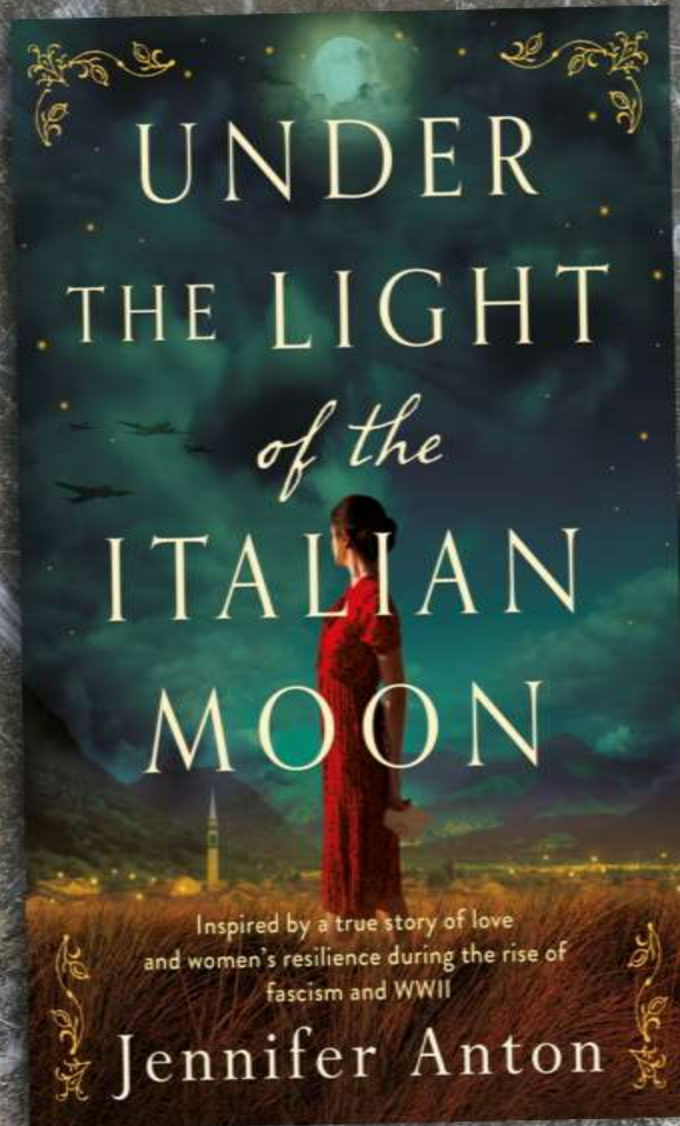
'I could not tear myself away from this beautifully written Italian saga about women keeping families together against all odds during Mussolini's despotic rule.'

– Angela Petch, bestselling author of The Tuscan Girl

'Anton's masterful and touching tribute to the women of her family is not only an important addition to the literature of the lived experiences of the wars, but also to that of strong, brave women triumphant in great adversity.'

– Indie McDowell, Founder and Director, Atsede Clinic. Secretary, Global Alliance of Independent Midwives

Book Club Questions



Reminder:

This guide was created to facilitate discussions after reading *Under the Light of the Italian Moon*. Key parts of the novel and plot are given away, so please be aware before proceeding.

Why do you think Nina chooses a long-distance marriage? Do you think her mother wanted that for her or helped orchestrate it? Do you think Nina could have been happy with a man who was always around?



At the beginning of the book, Nina is ten years old, then we flip to her being fifteen. At the end, Lasia is seventeen and Rita eleven. What similarities do you see in her daughters at the end to her in those years? If you are a mother, can you relate to remembering your own milestones as your children reach teen years?

Do you think women lose a piece of their identity when they become mothers, or does their identity develop and deepen?



What assumptions about “*La Donna Brava*”, the good woman, still exist today? Do you think there is any hope in reprogramming these deeply embedded values?

Is Nina's reaction to the birth of Lasia normal? Do you think Nina could have suffered from postnatal depression? How did their relationship change over time and why?



Who is your favourite character in the book? Who do you relate to the most? Why?

“War is to man as maternity is to a women.”

– Benito Mussolini

From the beginning of the book, we see Adelasia and Nina bringing life and caring for life, while we see Mussolini aiming for power and ultimately bringing more and more death. Eventually, Mussolini’s quest undoes so much of their work, as men who Adelasia helped deliver as babies die by the hands of the Nazis because of Mussolini’s actions. Are men more likely to want power and be willing to kill than women? Does this make women unfit to be leaders and do you think, deep down, it is something Mussolini said but that most societies still at their core believe?



Adelasia has many lines that make her a strong, opinionated woman, yet she holds very traditional values about family and the church. Would you consider her a feminist? She goes against Mussolini's policies knowingly. Is she a rebel? A criminal?

When Adelasia dies, Nina looks through her mother's jewellery box and finds mementos, some of which cannot be explained. Can you relate to the line, "we forget our mothers were once girls?"



How does the *Virgin Mary* play as a key symbol in this book? Why do you think most major religions are all based around males? Have women not tried or have they been actively repressed?

Do you think Pietro tried hard enough to bring them together? Why do you think it took so long for them to finally be together?



'In these populist days many of us know or have known how perplexing it is to live under a domineering leader who thinks he is always right. Back in 1922, Benito Mussolini in Italy was the first such person in modern times to scar his country's history. In this novel which mixes family memory, history and literary insight, Jennifer Anton gives us a case study from the interwar which is timeless in its themes and search for meaning.'

- Richard Bosworth, Professor R.J.B. Bosworth FASSA, FAHA, Emeritus Fellow, Jesus College Oxford,
Author of *Claretta: Mussolini's Last Lover*

Do you recognize similarities to political situations from the novel in today's political environment? What can we do today to stop history from repeating itself?

Some Italians emigrated, others stayed behind. What do you think defines our connection with our heritage? Is it better to move forward and acculturate to your new country, or stay tied to your roots? What makes some people leave and some stay? What makes some people interested in their roots and others not?

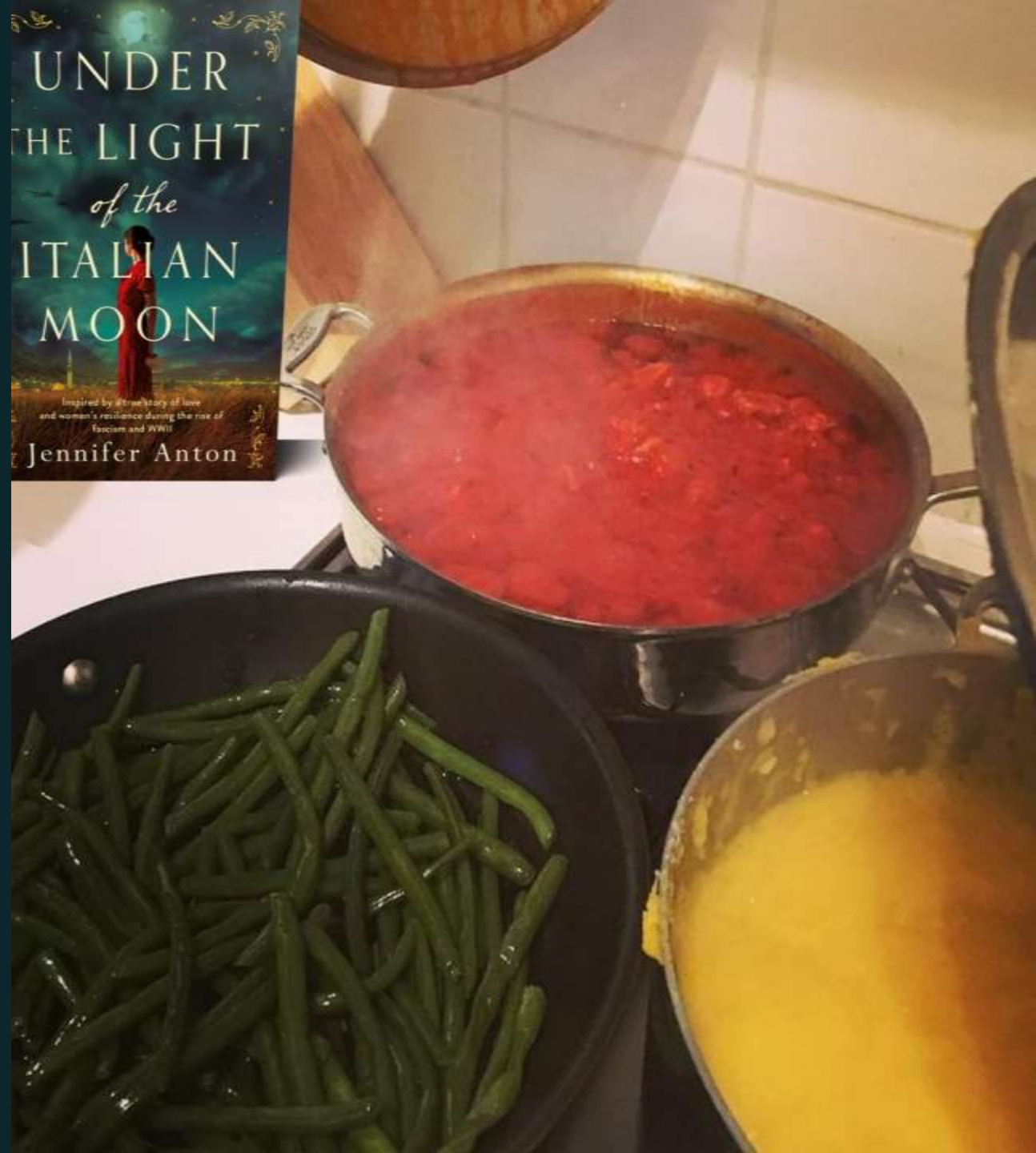


Anton covers a long period of time in the novel, from 1914, then 1919, 1923 and through to 1947, do you think this structure works vs. novels that drop you into the most active part of the story during the war?

What would have been improved or lost had she handled the timeline differently?



Italian Recipes



Anton's mother made polenta and sauce with baked cheese on Sundays when she was growing up, and still does. While not every recipe from Italy continued, this one did. How does food connect us to our roots? Have you ever taken a bite of a certain food and memories come flooding back, or it take you to a previous place and time?

Nonna Nancy's Sunday
Polenta Meal



Ingredients

Zia Angie's Polenta

- 6 cups water
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups cornmeal
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

Nonna Nancy's Sauce & Meat

- 1lb diced pork or beef
- 1/3 of a chopped onion
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 3 cups tomato puree or tomato sauce
- 2 tbsps tomato paste

Nonna Nancy's Baked Cheese

- 1lb light white cheese, cubed (Brick cheese or other)
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 stick of butter, cubed



Directions

Zia Angie's Polenta

- In large pot, boil water and salt
- Stir in cornmeal in small increments, stirring continuously
- Cook for **30** minutes stirring continuously until mixture becomes firm

*Note: Nonna Nancy would tell you to add some butter and cheese to "doctor it up"

Nonna Nancy's Sauce & Meat

- Sauté onion, garlic and olive oil
- Add in diced meat and brown until tender
- Add tomato puree and paste. Mix.
- Let simmer covered for **15** minutes

Nonna Nancy's Baked Cheese

- Pour diced cheese cubes into greased glass baking dish
 - Add butter cubes and egg
 - Mix together until egg coats all pieces
- Bake at **350** for **40** minutes



Fonzaso





Giovanni Battista Vieceli

Eremo di San Michele



By Vicenti G. Bellista

Fonzaso from above



Sant'Anna after restoration



Fonzaso from Sant'Anna



Fonzaso from path to San Micel



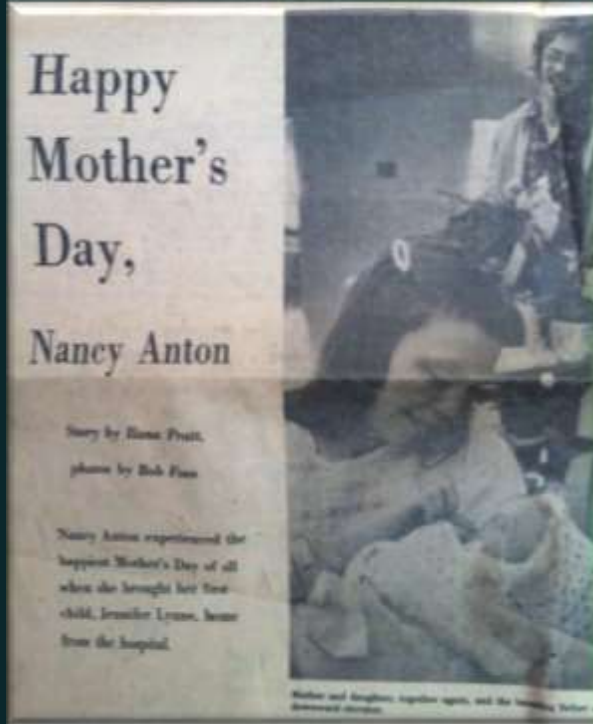
Municipio and fountain decorated for the
Festa dell'Uva



Via Calzen

Behind the Scenes





In 1977, the Joliet Herald News ran a Mother's Day article comparing modern hospitals to birth experiences with midwives in Italy



The Pante girls. When Lasia (far left died), Rita and Angie helped share stories from Italy, and of Ninetta.



A long line of strong Italian women. A legacy that continues.

Click each box to
watch on YouTube

Book Trailer:
Under the Light
of the
Italian Moon



Cover
secrets
behind
Under the Light
of the
Italian Moon



V1: Why I wrote
Under the Light
of the
Italian Moon



V2: The Italian
Storytellers: collecting
first-hand accounts from
Italian WWII survivors
Under the Light
of the
Italian Moon



V3: Women and Midwives
Italy, WWII
Under the Light
of the
Italian Moon

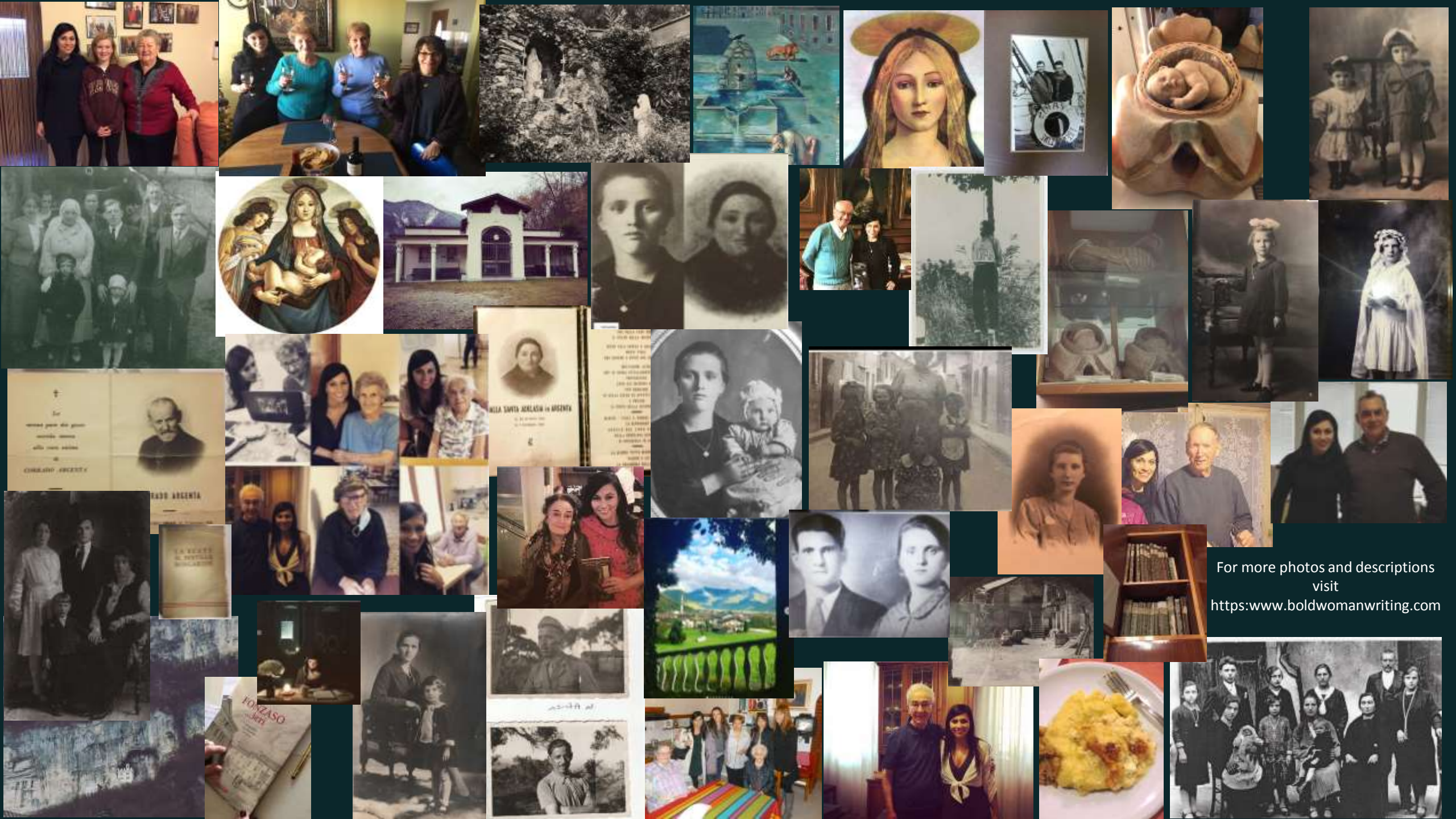


V4: The Resources: books
that informed my novel
Under the Light
of the
Italian Moon



V5: UNBOXING DAY!!
Under the Light
of the
Italian Moon





For more photos and descriptions visit
<https://www.boldwomanwriting.com>

History





Images include: local fascist poster, images from il Duce's visit to Belluno, propaganda behind the Battle for wheat and Gold for the Fatherland.



Images include: Mussolini's meeting with Hitler in Belluno, propaganda posters convincing Italians Germans were friendly, il Duce's motherhood medal

Group/Reader Challenge

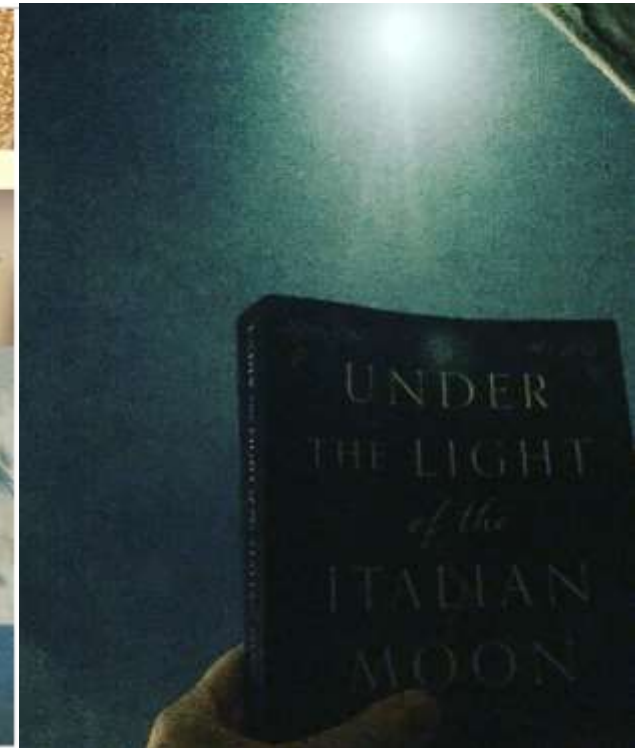
Take a photo of you or your book
and post it on Instagram, Twitter and
Facebook

Tag me: @boldwomanwriting (Insta)

@boldwomanwrites (Twitter)

#underthelightoftheitalianmoon

I'll repost as many as I can!



About the Author: Jennifer Anton

Jennifer Anton is an American/Italian dual citizen born in Joliet, Illinois, and now lives between London and Lake Como, Italy. A proud advocate for women's rights and equality, she hopes to rescue women's stories from history, starting with her Italian family.

I would love it if you:

- ✓ Write a review of the novel on [Amazon](#), [Goodreads](#) & [Bookbub](#)
- ✓ Connect with me on [Instagram](#) @boldwomanwriting and [Facebook](#)
- ✓ Join the mailing list at www.boldwomanwriting.com
- ✓ Hashtag a photo #underthelightoftheitalianmoon in a beautiful setting



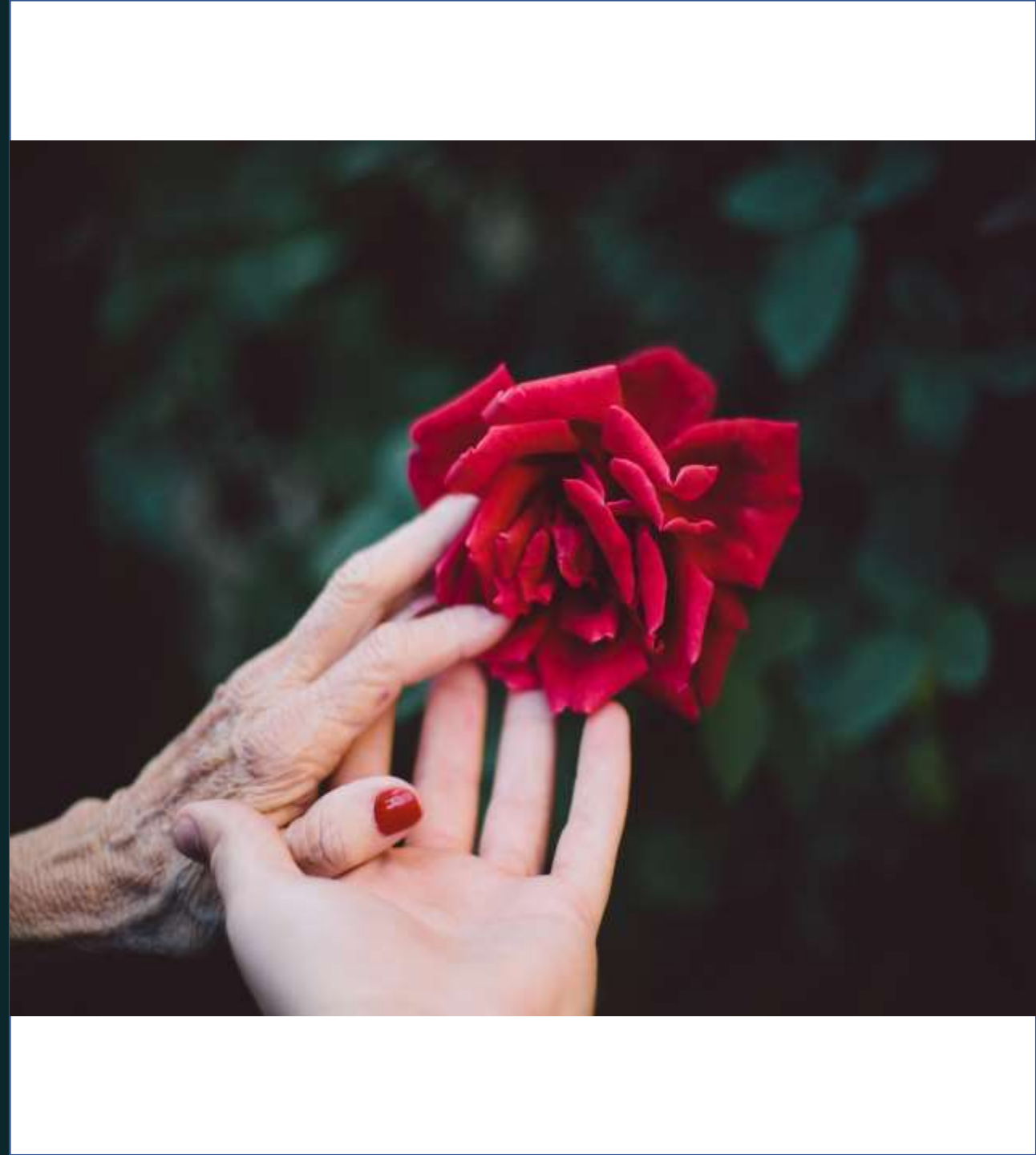
My final ask: Remember Women

"I want to matter to the world. My mother as figured out how to do that."

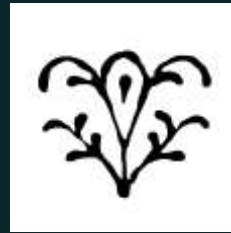
Nina Argenta, *Under the Light of the Italian Moon*

Make a commitment to remember women:

- ✓ Call an older woman: your mother, aunt, grandma/nonna, or visit a care home and ask the person about their life when they were young. Probe to get details. Listen. Consider recording it with permission to have it for future generations.
- ✓ Write your own story and put it in an envelope, share it on a blog or with your family if they are ready to listen.
- ✓ Go deeper with your friends. Ask about their childhoods, defining moments in their lives, their dreams.
- ✓ Ask how you can help them achieve their dreams and ask for help with yours.
- ✓ Never forget your power. There is nothing you cannot do or be if you follow a path and do it. No matter the age, keep striving and always, always lift others!



Grazie!
Cento baci!



Jennifer Anton

