may feel distanced from the book’s experienced tone as well as from Rousseau’s analytical writing, which on occasion reads as more dispassionate than ardent. Some of her insights begin to sound repetitive in the book’s middle section, too, but Rousseau regains her momentum when she talks about her work as a women’s advocate, and then as a civil rights leader for people with disabilities. She criticizes the white, wealthy feminist establishment for failing to advocate for disabled women, and pushes organizations to do more than simply address issues of accessibility. But page by page, she makes the case for herself—and to other disabled women—‘There is no fix for a lifetime of self-hatred,’ Rousseau writes. ‘Only slow healing.’ – AILEEN GALLAGHER

**NEW GIRL LAW: Drafting a Future for Cambodia**
*By Anne Elizabeth Moore (Microcosm)*

*New Girl Law* is a post-Empirical, proto-fourth-wave-feminist memoir-ess-roman abstract that scrutinizes the current reality and future hope for women aspiring to positions of power in Cambodia. If that sounds heavy, know that it also makes our country’s Mommy Wars look like children’s play—and prove, in the meantime, why we should be paying attention to Cambodia’s record of human rights and gender equity.

Author Anne Elizabeth Moore, a Fulbright scholar and U.N. Press Fellow, documents the struggles of Cambodian women and the ways in which the brutal reign of the Khmer Rouge continues to impact their lives. Popular and frequently used Khmer aphorisms like “Men are diamonds and women are cloths” have been thoroughly absorbed into Cambodia’s day-to-day life and culture. She collaborates with a group of young, ambitious women enrolled at universities in Phnom Penh to create a set of laws to empower women. Together, they come up with 20 rules, like, “Girls should be brave enough to make eye contact with and speak to boys,” and “Women should have the right to leave home and join in social activities as men do, or be involved in politics.” Yikes.

Throughout, Moore acknowledges the paradigm through which she filters her own observations, and points out that *New Girl Law* is a work in progress, analogous to the Declaration of Sentiments drafted by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her cohorts. Seventy-two years after Stanton’s *Sentiments* American women were given the right to vote. Perhaps it won’t take as long in Cambodia. – KATHLEEN WILLOX

When Emma Brockes' mother Paula emigrated from South Africa to England as a young woman, she brought only a few things with her: a six-piece dinner set, the complete works of Jane Austen, a two-piece suit, a handmade tapestry, and a handgun. Although Paula did not, in fact, leave Brockes with the gun (she turned it in during a gun amnesty), she did leave Brockes with dark hints of a violent childhood in South Africa. “One day I will tell you the story of my life,” Paula promised Brockes, “and you will be amazed.” Only, as Brockes writes, “She never did, not really, although I think she wanted to. So I went to find out for myself.” After Paula dies of cancer, Brockes—a journalist at The Guardian—travels to South Africa to uncover the truth of her mother’s childhood and reunit with the family she never met. The result is an unsettling, captivating tale of incest, alcoholism, poverty, abuse, and, above all, survival. Brockes’ account of her family history is at times disorganized and tangential—she spends far more time recalling a tourist trip with her best friend than she does examining how Paula began a new life in England, and she almost entirely brushes over her relatives’ racism and pro-apartheid beliefs. In spite of these flaws, however, *She Left Me the Gun* is an unflinching look at the way abuse and the resulting silence affect a family, and what happens when you finally speak the unspeakable.

– ERIKA W. SMITH