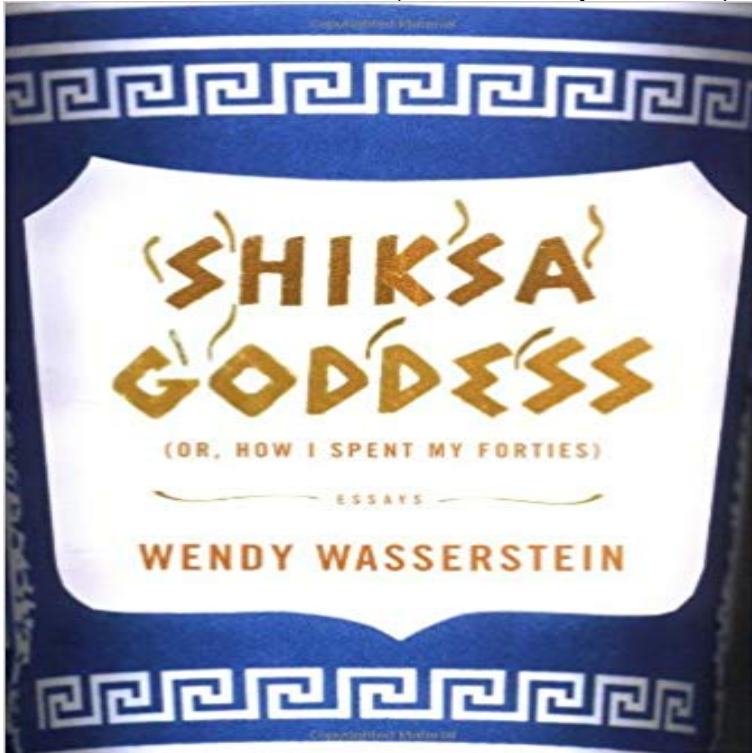


## Shiksa Goddess: Or, How I Spent My Forties



When Wendy Wasserstein turned forty, she made a To Do list composed mostly of items left over from when she turned thirty. The list included the annuals: lose weight, exercise, read more, improve female friendships, improve male friendships, and (left over from her second grade To Do list) become a better citizen. At the end of the list were the larger-than-life unavoids: move, fall in love, and decide about a baby. In *Shiksa Goddess*, her first book of essays in ten years, Wendy writes about each of the quests and midlife obsessions. On diets and cooking (I was born to order up . . . My favorite breakfast china has always been a paper cup embossed with a picture of the Parthenon.) . . . On getting in shape and hiring a personal trainer (Sue is on hand twenty-four hours to say, Stop! In the name of self-love . . . She is a fat-free beacon of light) . . . About the rise of the legendary Mrs. Entenmann, who married the boss at nineteen and went from salesgirl to bakery czarina . . . On the truth of her denominational heritage (the name Wasserstein was changed from Waterson by a distant relative in order to get his child into an Ivy League college and Mount Sinai Medical School) . . . On buying an apartment--and then seeking refuge from it for a year in a residential hotel (Life boiled back down to basics: work, friendship, and room service) . . . About attending the Golden Globe Awards . . . On the traditions of the holidays (I was very disappointed the first time I saw Plymouth Rock . . . I thought it would be surrounded by Barricini chocolate turkeys, dancing sweet potatoes, and Pilgrims in crepe-paper hats) . . . On MOTHERS Day and her mother, Lola Wasserstein (Lola encourages sending a homemade greeting card. A personal citation like I love you, Gramma or Mother, I promise next year to be married with three musically inclined children, a co-op, and a degree in dentistry is worth

thousands of words) . . . on Chekhov . . . George Abbott . . . And she writes movingly about her sisters battle with breast cancer, and about her own pregnancy at forty-eight and the birth of her first child, Lucy Jane.

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