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Sommario/riassunto	In many South Asian oral traditions, herons are viewed as duplicitous and conniving. These traditions tend also to view women as fragmented identities, dangerously split between virtue and virtuosity, between loyalties to their own families and those of their husbands. In women's songs, however, symbolic herons speak, telling of alternative moral perspectives shaped by women. The heron's words-and women's expressive genres more generally-criticize pervasive North Indian ideologies of gender and kinship that place women in subordinate positions. By inviting readers to "listen to the heron's words," the authors convey this shift in moral perspective and suggest that these spoken truths are compelling and consequential for the women in North India. The songs and narratives bear witness to a provocative

cultural dissonance embedded in women's speech. This book reveals the power of these critical commentaries and the fluid and permeable boundaries between spoken words and the lives of ordinary village women.
