

The Heart of a Stranger: An Anthology of Exile Literature

André Naffis-Sahely, Editor

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Featuring more than a hundred entries spanning every continent and thousands of years, *Heart of a Stranger* is a varied, compelling, and expansive view of the universal experience of exile.

This anthology includes recognized accounts of exile from Emma Goldman, Madame de Stael, and Dante, but its greatest strength is its focus on unexpected voices and lesser known corners of history. Editor André Naffis-Sahely excludes Pablo Neruda as well as the Paris expatriates of the 1920s, for instance, to make room for writers like the Assyrian-Iraqi poet Sargon Boulas, Egyptian poet Iman Mersal, Navajo poet Luci Tapahonso, and the anonymous union member who recounted the expulsion of striking workers from a Phelps Dodge copper mine in Arizona in 1917.

Senses of calamity, dislocation, and rootlessness arise, as in a powerful passage from the Chinese Uyghur poet Ahmatjan Osman:

*I listen to the cries of suffering there
far away, waking inside me a nostalgic distance
like the caws of crows
on bare branches in a cemetery.*

There are also exhilarating accounts of reconciliation and self-chosen exile, as with Robert Service's ode to "The Spell of the Yukon" and the lure of "the beauty that thrills me with wonder."

The juxtaposition of such diverse experiences and points of view brings a fresh, often startling, perspective to a topic that is at once familiar and foreign. Portraying "as vast an array of exilic situations as possible," including ethnic, religious, sexual, and political exile, the book includes helpful historical and thematic context to open each section. The result is a complex, layered exploration of revolutionaries, rebels, outcasts, and the oppressed.

With world events bringing attention to questions of immigration, expulsion, homeland, and identity, *The Heart of a Stranger* is an essential and thought-provoking collection that contributes varied perspectives to a vital conversation.

KRISTEN RABE (January / February 2020)

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