



Monarch of the Square: An Anthology of Muhammad Zafzaf's Short Stories (Middle East Literature In Translation)

From Syracuse University Press

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A master of the short story form, Muhammad Zafzaf is one of Morocco's greatest narrative writers. This anthology, the first collection of his work translated into English, is a tribute to the remarkable influence he exerted on an entire generation of Moroccan storytellers.

Zafzaf's stories are set within a variety of contexts, each portraying a slice of life, a simple struggle for survival in a challenging world that is changing at a rapid pace. Narrative time is reduced to a single glimpse in these stories, full of irony, sarcasm, and sympathy. He covers all aspects of Moroccan life, from remote rural villages to modern cities. The stories in this collection explore the various myths, beliefs, and traditions that operate within Moroccan culture, questioning them from a distance in an easy, conversational manner that is the hallmark of Zafzaf's style.

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Editorial Review

Review

The translation remains faithful to the original while at the same time it preserves a certain local color, an accent of sorts that conveys the Moroccan flavors of the stories. This anthology helps to fill a huge gap in the library of Arabic literature in translation. (William Granara *Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University*)

The stories provide key insights and commentary on social and cultural transformations in the modern Moroccan scene and offer profound reflections on the human condition. They reflect Zafzaf's concern with many issues that are still poignantly current today, such as: how individuals struggle to survive, how they cope with social marginalization and disillusionment, and how one can navigate identity in a world of often conflicting and paradoxical realities. (Ahmed Idrissi Alami *Purdue University*)

About the Author

Muhammad Zafzaf (1945-2001) was one of the most prominent writers of the Maghreb. The author of dozens of novels and short stories, Zafzaf was celebrated for his innovative, modernist, and aesthetic literature rooted in the detailed daily anxieties of the ordinary Moroccan.

Mbarek Sryfi is a lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania and an adjunct assistant professor at Mercer County Community College in New Jersey. His translations have appeared in CELAAN, *Metamorphos*, *World Literature Today*, and *Banipal*.

Roger Allen is Sascha Jane Patterson Harvie Professor of Social Thought and Comparative Ethics, School of Arts and Sciences, and professor emeritus of Arabic and comparative literature at the University of Pennsylvania.

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