



The Waiting List: An Iraqi Woman's Tales of Alienation (Modern Middle East Literature in Translation)

Daisy Al-Amir

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Daisy Al-Amir is one of the more visible figures in women's fiction in the Arab world today. This collection of stories, originally published in Lebanon as *Ala La'ihat al-Intizar*, is the most recent of her five publications. Her stories intimately reflect women's experiences in the chaotic worlds of the Lebanese civil war and the rise of Saadam Hussain as Iraq's leader. Set in Iraq, Cyprus, and Lebanon, the stories shed light on an unusual Middle East refugee experience—that of a cultural refugee, a divorced woman who is educated, affluent, and alone.

Al-Amir is also a poet and novelist, whose sensual prose grows out of a long tradition of Iraqi poetry. But one also finds existential themes in her works, as Al-Amir tries to balance what seems fated and what seems arbitrary in the turbulent world she inhabits. She deals with time and space in a minimalist, surreal style, while studying the disappointments of life through the subjective lens of memory. Honestly facing the absence of family and the instability of place, Al-Amir gives lifelike qualities to the inanimate objects of her rapidly changing world.

In addition to the stories, two examples of the author's experimental poems are included. In her introduction, Mona Mikhail places these stories and poems in the context of contemporary Islamic literature and gender studies.

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