

My Father's Rifle: A Childhood in Kurdistan

Hiner Saleem



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This beautiful, spare, autobiographical narrative tells of the life of a Kurd named Azad as he grows to manhood in Iraq during the 1960s and 1970s. Azad is born into a vibrant village culture that hopes for a free Kurdish future. He loves his mother's orchard, his cousin's stunt pigeons, his father's old Czech rifle, his brother who is fighting in the mountains. But before he is even of school age, Azad has seen friends and neighbors assassinated, and his own family driven to starvation.

After being forced into a refugee camp in Iran for years, his family realizes, on their return, that the Baathist regime is destroying the autonomy it had promised their people. *My Father's Rifle* ends with Azad's heartbreaking departure from his parents and flight across the Syrian border to freedom.

Stunning in its unadorned intensity, *My Father's Rifle* is a moving portrait of a boy who embraces the land and culture he loves, even as he leaves them.

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