



Above All, Don't Look Back (CARAF Books: Caribbean and African Literature translated from the French)

By Maïssa Bey

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Above All, Don't Look Back (CARAF Books: Caribbean and African Literature translated from the French) By Maïssa Bey

Above All, Don't Look Back follows the path of a young woman?Amina?as she makes her way through a city, a life, and a sense of self that have been ravaged by an earthquake. In this powerful novel, inspired by a devastating earthquake in northern Algeria in 2003, the acclaimed Algerian writer Maïssa Bey skillfully interweaves descriptions of the earthquake with descriptions of Amina's family, culture, and country and her place within them. She leaves the reader to wonder whether Amina is fleeing the earthquake or something much more complex.

Through prose that marries form and content, Bey shows the full breadth of her talent. She goes beyond straightforward journalistic narrative to represent the inner experience of a victim of a natural disaster. The novel's nonlinear structure and deliberate incoherence plunge the reader into a state of disorientation that will especially resonate for survivors of other natural disasters worldwide.

In linking a particular place, context, and event to themes of identity, family, and the relation of the individual to the group and of religion to society, *Above All, Don't Look Back* explores psychological and social issues of universal relevance.

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Editorial Review

Review

This novel is especially well written, showing the maturity of the experienced writer; it is also an interesting work, as the author delves with compelling force into crucial questions of nation, religion, society, family, gender, memory, and madness, against the backdrop of a natural disaster.

(Alison Rice, University of Notre Dame, *author of Time Signatures: Contextualizing Contemporary Francophone Autobiographical Writing from the Maghreb*)

About the Author

Maïssa Bey is an award-winning novelist, writer of short stories, poet, and essayist. She lives in Algeria. Senja L. Djelouah has won academic distinction for her literary translations from French into English.

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