



# The Art of the Story: An International Anthology of Contemporary Short Stories

From Halpern, Daniel (EDT)

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**An anthology featuring contemporary masters of the short story around the globe, including Margaret Atwood, Salman Rushdie, Joyce Carol Oates, Martin Amis, and more**

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

A reader doesn't want to love every story in an anthology. A collection of short fiction by various authors should be just that: various. We want all the stories to be admirable, but not necessarily lovable. This is how anthologies do their job, which is to teach us to love new forms of fiction. And this is how Daniel Halpern, editor of *The Art of the Story*, does his job. Halpern previously brought us the successful and far-reaching collection *The Art of the Tale*. Now he has taken upon himself the task of creating an international sampling of the contemporary short story. Seventy-eight writers from 35 countries--including Banana Yoshimoto, Junot Díaz, Peter Hoeg, Julian Barnes, T.C. Boyle, Salman Rushdie, Peter Carey, Edwidge Danticat, and Tatyana Tolstaya--demonstrate that the story still brims with unrest and disharmony and, well, variousness. The classical form, the story that implies the world in a truncated scene or two, that implies a life in a single moment, is amply represented in this collection by writers like Ann Beattie ("In Amalfi") and Raymond Carver ("Are These Actual Miles?"). But the new story ranges farther than the personal, making inroads into the parodic, the fantastic, the speculative. As Halpern writes in the preface, "There seems to be a more investigative nature to the fiction of these stories written so close to the end of this century, a tendency, especially among writers from emerging nations, to use the story as a means of orientation, to restate for themselves their position--politically, socially, and artistically--as if for these writers there is radically less separation between reality and the imagination." Certainly this is an apt description of the fiction of Nigeria's Booker Prize winner Ben Okri ("In the Shadow of War") and of American newcomer Nathan Englander, whose "The Twenty-Seventh Man" describes the slaughter of Yiddish writers and contains the unforgettable dictate, "Never outlive your language." --*Claire Dederer*

#### From Publishers Weekly

A decade after Halpern's *Art of the Tale* anthology comes a hefty companion volume, this one collecting 78 international, contemporary authors, those born between 1938 and 1970. The new book elegantly shrugs off the dictates of political and cultural theorists to answer the demands of literary aesthetics. Yet the stories represented here, written by authors from 35 countries, are rife with honest social commentary: Haruki Murakami's suburban fantasy "The Elephant Vanishes" is told by a bourgeois Japanese man living outside Tokyo; the characters in Bobbie Ann Mason's "Wish" are poor tobacco farmers with crocheted pillows, sour stomachs and dirt yards; "Escort" by Abdulrazak Gurnah tells of a Tanzanian who returns briefly from England, where he is a teacher and a scholar of poetry, and becomes unwillingly involved with his taxi driver, a meticulously evil lapsed Muslim named Salim. The philosophy guiding Halpern's choices, as he points out in a refreshingly brief introduction, is that contemporary authors, unlike the early moderns collected in his previous anthology, are essentially reactionary: they respond conservatively, critically and satirically to the effluvia of current popular media. Though claiming to be an international selection, the majority of these stories were written in English, and many are by the usual suspects for such a collection: Lorrie Moore, Joyce Carol Oates, Julian Barnes, Martin Amis, T.C. Boyle, Raymond Carver. The international scene is represented by well-known writers-in-translation like Banana Yoshimoto, Patrick Chamoiseau and Peter Esterhazy, along with some distinguished voices not yet discovered by mainstream American readers. Halpern selected these stories with great intelligence and zero trendiness, and the anthology is a true pleasure at every turn. (Nov.)

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#### From Library Journal

This carefully chosen collection features 78 writers from 35 countries, all born between 1938 and 1970.

Many of them will be familiar, like Margaret Atwood and Salman Rushdie, but many will be new to readers. Hanif Kureishi, Torgny Lindgren, and Ben Okri, to name a few. Halpern has included short biographical notes on all of the authors following the text. The quality of the stories is consistently high, proving that the short story is very much alive and that it is still a powerful form of writing. Halpern is also the editor of *The Art of the Tale* and the author of eight poetry collections. This new collection is an ideal purchase for anyone looking for an extraordinary book of short stories that is truly global. An important volume for public and academic libraries. Lisa Rohrbaugh, East Palestine Memorial P.L., OH  
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