

Nanjing Requiem Ha Jin

A Christian Science Monitor Best Book of the Year From the award-winning author of Waiting and War Trash: a riveting tale of espionage and conflicted loyalties that spans half a century in the entwined histories of two countries—China and the United States—and two families. When Lilian Shang, born and raised in America, discovers her father’s diary after the death of her parents, she is shocked by the secrets it contains. She knew that her father, Gary, convicted decades ago of being a mole in the CIA, was the most important Chinese spy ever caught. But his diary, an astonishing chronicle of his journey as a Communist intelligence agent, reveals the pain and longing that his double life entailed—and point to a hidden second family that he’d left behind in China. As Lilian follows her father’s trail back into the Chinese provinces, she begins to grasp the extent of his dilemma: he is a man torn between loyalty to his motherland and the love he came to feel for his adopted country. She sees how his sense of duty distorted his life, and as she starts to understand that Gary too had been betrayed, Lilian finds that it is up to her to prevent his tragedy from endangering yet another generation of Shangs. A stunning portrait of a multinational family and an unflinching inquiry into the meaning of citizenship, patriotism, and home, A Map of Betrayal is a spy novel that only Ha Jin could write.

The boy known as Tor Baz—the black falcon—wanders between tribes. He meets men who fight under different flags, and women who risk everything if they break their society’s code of honour. Where has he come from, and where will destiny take him? Set in the decades before the rise of the Taliban, Jamil Ahmad’s stunning debut takes us to the essence of human life in the forbidden areas where the borders of Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan meet. Today the ‘tribal areas’ are often spoken about as a remote region, a hotbed of conspiracies, drone attacks and conflict. In The Wandering Falcon, this highly traditional, honour-bound culture is revealed from the inside for the first time. With rare tenderness and perception, Jamil Ahmad describes a world of custom and cruelty, of love and gentleness, of hardship and survival, a fragile, unforgiving world that is changing as modern forces make themselves known. With the fate-defying story of Tor Baz, he has written an unforgettable novel of insight, compassion and timeless wisdom. It is true, I am neither a Mahsud nor a Wazir. But I can tell you as little about who I am as I can about who I shall be. Think of Tor Baz as your hunting falcon. That should be enough.

A compelling glimpse into a captivatingly exotic world of myth and magic. Beguiled by promises of wealth, fourteen-year-old Lakshmi leaves her native Ceylon for Malaya and marriage to a man many years her senior. But Ayah has lied to her and her family about his circumstances and in fact he lives in poverty. A woman of formidable energy and intelligence, Lakshmi provides security, if not luxury, for her family, though at a considerable emotional cost. Then the Japanese army invades during WWII. The family bears deep scars and inflicts those wounds on the next generation. But in Nisha, Lakshmi’s great-granddaughter, it is as if Fate has come full circle A Chinese woman shares her family’s often traumatic experience in Communist China, from her birth during the Great Famine of the early 1960s through the horrors of the Cultural Revolution and the massacre at Tiananmen Square. Reprint.

Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism

The Rice Mother

Ocean of Words

In the Sea There Are Crocodiles

Waiting

From the award-winning author of Waiting and War Trash: an urgent, timely novel that follows an aspiring author, an outrageous book idea, and a lone journalist’ s dogged quest for truth in the Internet age. New York, 2005. Chinese expatriate Feng Danlin is a fiercely principled reporter at a small news agency that produces a website read by the Chinese diaspora around the world. Danlin’ s explosive expos é s have made him legendary among readers—and feared by Communist officials. But his newest assignment may be his undoing: investigating his ex-wife, Yan Haili, an unscrupulous novelist who has willingly become a pawn of the Chinese government in order to realize her dreams of literary stardom. Haili’ s scheme infuriates Danlin both morally and personally—he will do whatever it takes to expose her as a fraud. But in outing Haili, he is also provoking her powerful political allies, and he will need to draw on all of his journalistic cunning to emerge from this investigation with his career—and his life—still intact. A brilliant, darkly funny story of corruption, integrity, and the power of the pen, The Boat Rocker is a tour de force of modern fiction.

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In this deeply stirring novel, acclaimed author Cristina Garc í a follows one extraordinary family through four generations, from China to Cuba to America. Wonderfully evocative of time and place, rendered in the lyrical prose that is Garc í a’ s hallmark, Monkey Hunting is an emotionally resonant tale of immigration, assimilation, and the prevailing integrity of self.

Ha Jin's themes of personal honour in the face of political rectitude are carried forward here in his first novel, a close, unsentimental depiction of life in a small factory town; the manoeuvring, posturing, petty jealousies and injustices of an ordinary man who tangles with party bosses.

War Trash

The Bridegroom

The Flowers of War

Human Acts

East Asia's Haunted Present: Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism

A gorgeous literary debut about second chances, New England Book Festival prize winner The Rest of Us is an indelible love story that explores the legacy of an affair between a young student and her older professor. As a college student, Terry fell madly and destructively in love with Rhinehart, her famous poetry professor—a relationship from which she never fully recovered. Now, fifteen years later, she is single, still living in the New York City walk-up she moved into after college, and languishing as a photographer’s assistant, having long since abandoned her own art. When she stumbles on Rhinehart’s obituary online, complete with litany of his own accomplishments, she finds herself taking stock of the ways she has not lived up to her youthful expectations—and surprisingly distraught at the thought of never seeing him again. And then, a few weeks later, she bumps into Rhinehart himself: very much alive, married, and Christmas shopping at Bloomingdale’s. What ensues is an intense and beautiful friendship, an unexpected second act that inspires Terry to come to terms with the consequences of their past and the depth of her own aspirations—and to begin to grow again, as an artist and a woman. A captivating read to the last page, The Rest of Us explores those nagging questions that haunt us when we think of who we are, and who we might have been—a love letter to New York City and the struggles of its artists, and a sharp and stirring novel of the heart from a ‘promising new voice in fiction’ (The Daily Beast).

From Giller Prize winner, internationally acclaimed, and bestselling author Vincent Lam comes a superbly crafted, highly suspenseful, and deeply affecting novel set against the turmoil of the Vietnam War. Percival Chen is the headmaster of the most respected English school in Saigon. He is also a bon vivant, a compulsive gambler and an incorrigible womanizer. He is well accustomed to bribing a forever-changing list of government officials in order to maintain the elite status of the Chen Academy. He is fiercely proud of his Chinese heritage, and that is what gives him the business opportunities rife in a divided country. He devotedly ignores all news of the fighting that swirls around him, choosing instead to read the faces of his opponents at high-stakes mahjong tables. But when his only son gets in trouble with the Vietnamese authorities, Percival faces the limits of his connections and wealth and is forced to send him away. In the loneliness that follows, Percival finds solace in Jacqueline, a beautiful woman of mixed French and Vietnamese heritage, and Laing-lai, a son born to them on the eve of the Tet offensive. Percival’s now-found happiness is precarious, and as the complexities of war encroach further and further into his world, he must confront the tragedy of all he has refused to see. Blessed with intriguingly flawed characters moving through a richly drawn historical and physical landscape, The Headmaster’s Wager is a riveting story of love, betrayal and sacrifice.

During the 1937 attack on Nanjing, American missionary and women’s college dean Minnie Vautrin decides to remain at her school during a Japanese attack that renders the school a refugee center for ten thousand women and children.

Gwangju, South Korea, 1980. In the wake of a viciously suppressed student uprising, a boy searches for his friend’s corpse, a consciousness searches for its abandoned body, and a brutalised country searches for a voice. In a sequence of interconnected chapters the victims and the bereaved encounter censorship, denial, forgiveness and the echoing agony of the original trauma. Human Acts is a universal book, utterly modern and profoundly timeless. Already a controversial bestseller and award-winning book in Korea, it confirms Han Kang as a writer of immense importance.

A Good Fall

The Wandering Falcon

In the Pond

A Distant Center

Monkey Hunting

I read somewhere that the decision to emigrate comes from a need to breathe. The hope of a better life is stronger than any other feeling. My mother decided it was better to know I was in danger far from her; but on the way to a different future, than to know I was in danger near her; but stuck in the same old fear. At the age of ten, Enaiatollah Akbari was left alone to fend for himself. This is the heartbreaking, unforgettable story of his journey from Afghanistan to Italy in an attempt to find a safe place to live.

A New York Times Notable Book One of the Best Books of the Year: Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, Entertainment Weekly, Slate In A Free Life. Ha Jin follows the Wu family — father Nan, mother Pingping, and son Taotao — as they sever their ties with China in the aftermath of the 1989 massacre at Tiananmen Square and begin a new life in the United States. As Nan takes on a number of menial jobs, eventually operating a restaurant with Pingping, he struggles to adapt to the American way of life and to hold his family together, even as he pines for a woman he loved and lost in his youth. Ha Jin’s prodigious talents are in full force as he brilliantly brings to life the struggles and successes of the contemporary immigrant experience.

During the 1937 attack on Nanjing, American missionary and women’s college dean Minnie Vautrin decides to remain at her school during a violent Japanese attack that renders the school a refugee center for ten thousand women and children.

How could the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) not only survive but even thrive, regaining the support of many Chinese citizens after the Tiananmen Square crackdown of 1989? Why has popular sentiment turned toward anti-Western nationalism despite the anti-dictatorship democratic movements of the 1980s? And why has China been more assertive toward the United States and Japan in foreign policy but relatively conciliatory toward smaller countries in conflict? Offering an explanation for these unexpected trends, Zheng Wang follows the Communist government’s ideological reeducation of the public, which relentlessly portrays China as the victim of foreign imperialist bullying during Öne hundred years of humiliation.Ö By concentrating on the telling and teaching of history in today’s China, Wang illuminates the thinking of the young patriots who will lead this rising power in the twenty-first century. Wang visits China’s primary schools and memory sites and reads its history textbooks, arguing that China’s rise should not be viewed through a single lens, such as economics or military growth, but from a more comprehensive perspective that takes national identity and domestic discourse into account. Since it is the prime raw material for constructing China’s national identity, historical memory is the key to unlocking the inner mystery of the Chinese. From this vantage point, Wang tracks the CCP’s use of history education to glorify the party, reestablish its legitimacy, consolidate national identity, and justify one-party rule in the post-Tiananmen and postCold War era. The institutionalization of this manipulated historical consciousness now directs political discourse and foreign policy, and Wang demonstrates its important role in China’s rise.

Narratives of Diaspora

The Headmaster’s Wager

Wolf Totem

Nicotiana, Or, The Smoker’s and Snuff-taker’s Companion [electronic Resource]

A Life of Li Bai (Li Po)

Set in Kabul under the rule of the Taliban, this extraordinary novel takes readers into the lives of two couples to offer an unflinching but compassionate insight into a society that violence and hypocrisy have brought to the edge of despair.

A FINALIST FOR THE MAN BOOKER INTERNATIONAL PRIZE
Deep within the Balu mountains lies a small rural town populated by disabled people. Blind, deaf and disfigured, the 197 citizens of the Village of Liven have until now enjoyed a peaceful, mutually supportive life out of sight and mind of the government. But when an unseasonal snowstorm wipes out that year’s crops, a county official dreams up a scheme that will raise money for the district and boost his career. He convinces the villagers to set up a travelling freak-show, to include Blind Tonghua’s Acute Listening Act and Deafman Ma’s Firecrackers-on-the-Ear. With the money, he intends to buy Lenin’s embalmed corpse from an ailing Russia and install it in a splendid mausoleum in the mountains to attract tourism to this sleepy district. However, as we all know, even the best intentions can go awry.

Professor Yang, a respected teacher of literature, has had a stroke and it falls to Jian Wan - who is also engaged to Yang’s daughter - to care for him. It initially seems a simple duty until the professor begins to rave, pleading with invisible tormentors and denouncing his family... Are these just manifestations of illness, or is Yang spewing up the truth? In a China convulsed by the Tiananmen uprising, those who listen to the truth are as much at risk as those who speak it. Lyrical and heart-breaking, The Crazyed is an incisive portrait of modern Chinese society.

This collection of essays by leading scholars from Japan, China, South Korea, and the United States examines how and why bitter historical memories have resurfaced in recent years as freshly virulent and contentious issues between Japan and its neighbors—especially China and South Korea. Moreover, it seeks to identify what set of conditions and what sequence of measures will enable these modern nations to manage, palliate, and exorcise the wrongs of the past in a spirit of reconciliation, so that the dangerous growth of nationalist resentments and revanchism can be checked. Comfort women ... the Yasukuni Shrine ... the history textbook controversies ... The single sorest issue confronting East Asia today is the growing animosity and conflict between Japan and its neighbors—especially China and South Korea—over their respective and collective memories of Japan’s pre-1945 militaristic aggression, oppression, and atrocities. Even as East Asia has established itself as one of the most vibrant economic regions of the world, the strident nationalisms that have emerged here in the post-Cold War period have exacerbated historical grievances and heightened the international tensions that separate Japan from China and South Korea, blocking the development of an international system based on comity and cooperation.

A Free Life

The Rest of Us

Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations

The Crazyed

The Banished Immortal

The winner of the 1986 PEN/Hemingway Award for Fiction and three Pushcart Prizes presents twelve stories set during China’s Cultural Revolution, tales of moral degeneration and ideological cruelty that won the Flannery O’Connor Award for Short Fiction.

The award-winning author of Waiting and War Trash returns to his homeland in a searing new novel that unfolds during one of the darkest moments of the twentieth century: the Rape of Nanjing. In 1937, with the Japanese poised to invade Nanjing, Minnie Vautrin—an American missionary and the dean of Jining Women’ s College—decides to remain at the school, convinced that her American citizenship will help her safeguard the welfare of the Chinese men and women who work there. She is painfully mistaken. In the aftermath of the invasion, the school becomes a refugee camp for more than ten thousand homeless women and children, and Vautrin must struggle, day after day, to intercede on behalf of the hapless victims. Even when order and civility are eventually restored, Vautrin remains deeply embattled, and she is haunted by the lives she could not save. With extraordinarily evocative precision, Ha Jin re-creates the terror, the harrowing deprivations, and the menace of unexpected violence that defined life in Nanjing during the occupation. In Minnie Vautrin he has given us an indelible portrait of a woman whose convictions and bravery prove, in the end, to be no match for the maelstrom of history. At once epic and intimate, Nanjing Requiem is historical fiction at its most resonant.

The Swallows of Kabul

Representations of Asia in Chinese American Literature

Alive

When the Elephants Dance

Never Forget National Humiliation

Meili, a young peasant woman born in the remote heart of China, is married to Kongzi, a village school teacher, and a distant descendant of Confucius. They have a daughter, but desperate for a son to carry on his illustrious family line, Kongzi gets Meili pregnant again without waiting for official permission. When family planning officers storm the village to arrest violators of the population control policy, mother, father and daughter escape to the Yangtze River and begin a fugitive life. For years they drift south through the poisoned waterways and ruined landscapes of China, picking up work as they go along, scavenging for necessities and flying from police detection. As Meili’ s body continues to be invaded by her husband and assaulted by the state, she fights to regain control of her fate and that of her unborn child.

This is the second volume of poems from Chinese ex-patriot poet Ha Jin, who moved to the United States after the Tiananmen massacre. -- Amazon.com.

Ha Jin’ s masterful new novel casts a searchlight into a forgotten corner of modern history, the experience of Chinese soldiers held in U.S. POW camps during the Korean War. In 1951 Yu Yuan, a scholarly and self-effacing clerical officer in Mao’ s “volunteer” army, is taken prisoner south of the 38th Parallel. Because he speaks English, he soon becomes an intermediary between his compatriots and their American captors.With Yuan as guide, we are ushered into the secret life behind the barbed wire, a world where kindness alternates with blinding cruelty and one has infinitely more to fear from one’ s fellow prisoners than from the guards. Vivid in its historical detail, profound in its imaginative empathy, War Trash is Ha Jin’ s most ambitious book to date.

The award-winning author of Waiting and War Trash returns to his homeland in a searing new novel that unfolds during one of the darkest moments of the twentieth century: the Rape of Nanjing. In 1937, with the Japanese poised to invade Nanjing, Minnie Vautrin—an American missionary and the dean of Jining Women’ s College—decides to remain at the school, convinced that her American citizenship will help her safeguard the welfare of the Chinese men and women who work there. She is painfully mistaken. In the aftermath of the invasion, the school becomes a refugee camp for more than ten thousand homeless women and children, and Vautrin must struggle, day after day, to intercede on behalf of the hapless victims. Even when order and civility are eventually restored, Vautrin remains deeply embattled, and she is haunted by the lives she could not save. With extraordinarily evocative precision, Ha Jin re-creates the terror, the harrowing deprivations, and the menace of unexpected violence that defined life in Nanjing during the occupation. In Minnie Vautrin he has given us an indelible portrait of a woman whose convictions and bravery prove, in the end, to be no match for the maelstrom of history. At once epic and intimate, Nanjing Requiem is historical fiction at its most resonant.

Facing Shadows

Nanjing Requiem

The Red Chamber

Containing the History of Tobacco; Culture, Medical Qualities and the Laws Relative to Its Importation and Manufacture: With an Essay in Its Defence. The Whole Elegantly...

The Boat Rocker

Chinese American authors often find it necessary to represent Asian history in their literary works. Tracing the development of the literary production of Maxine Hong Kingston, Amy Tan, Lisa See, and Russell Leong, among others, this book captures the effects of international politics and globalization on Chinese American diasporic consciousness.

The story of Lin Kong, a man living in two worlds, struggling with the conflicting claims of two utterly different women.

On the death of her mother, Lin Daiyu, a beautiful young girl, is taken far away to the capital to live with her mother’s aristocratic relatives in the inner courtyards of Rongguo Mansion. educated and resourceful, Daiyu has grown up in relative freedom down south. Now she finds herself in the strictly regulated society of 18th century Beijing where women are bought and traded like cattle. This is a highly competitive female society of first wives, concubines and servants all jockeying for power. Dazzled by the easy charm and rebellious intelligence of her cousin, Baoyu, whose miraculous birth with a piece of jade in his mouth means that he holds the fortune of the family in his hands, Daiyu falls dangerously in love. And as she tries to tread a delicate path between following her heart and doing what is asked of her, she discovers that no one’s loyalty is immune to the pressures of society.

From the universally admired, National Book Award-winning, bestselling author of Waiting—a timely novel that follows a famous Chinese singer severed from his country, as he works to find his way in the United States At the end of a U.S. tour with his state-supported choir, popular singer Yao Tian takes a private gig in New York to pick up some extra cash for his daughter’s tuition fund, but the consequences of his choice spiral out of control. On his

return to China, Tian is informed that the sponsors of the event were supporters of Taiwan’s secession, and that he must deliver a formal self-criticism. When he is asked to forfeit his passport to his employer, Tian impulsively decides instead to return to New York to protest the government’s threat to his artistic integrity. With the help of his old friend Yabin, Tian’s career begins to flourish in the United States. But he is soon placed on a Chinese government blacklist and thwarted by the state at every turn, and it becomes increasingly clear that he may never return to China unless he denounces the freedoms that have made his new life possible. Tian nevertheless insists on his identity as a performer, refusing to give up his art. Moving, important, and strikingly relevant to our times, A Song Everlasting is a story of hope in the face of hardship from one of our most celebrated authors.

Lenin’s Kisses

The Dark Road

A Song Everlasting

Daughter of the River

Red Sorghum

Spanning three generations, this novel of family and myth is told through a series of flashbacks that depict events of staggering horror set against a landscape of gemlike beauty as the Chinese battle both the Japanese invaders and each other in the turbulent 1930s. As the novel opens, a group of villagers, led by Commander Yu, the narrator’s grandfather, prepare to attack the advancing Japanese. Yu sends his 14-year-old son back home to get food for his men; but as Yu’s wife returns through the sorghum fields with the food, the Japanese start firing and she is killed. Her death becomes the thread that links the past to the present and the narrator moves back and forth recording the ways s progress, the fighting between the Chinese warriors and his family’s history.

“Crystal Boys is the first Chinese novel on gay themes. A-qing, the identified hero, comes from an impoverished family. His father casts him out after learning that his son is gay. A-qing drifts into New Park, a gay hangout in Taipei, and begins his life as a hustler. He meets other boys living on the street, also forsaken by their families: Little Jade, who is constantly searching for his unknown father; Mousey, an orphan and petty thief; and Wu Min, a shy and tender kid, who attempts suicide when discarded by a middle-aged man. These four boys become fast friends and are taken under the protection of Chief Yang, a flashy gay guru in the Park. The boys begin to build a family of their own. Meanwhile, A-qing meets Dragon Prince, whose passionate and fateful love for Phoenix Boy has become a legend in the Park. . . . The second part of the novel deals with the Cozy Nest, a gay bar run by Chief Yang, where the boys and other homosexual exiles have found a refuge. The bar is sponsored by Papa Fu, whose young soldier son had shot himself when his homosexuality was exposed. In Taiwan, the gay community is known as the buolian, literally ‘glass community,’ while the individuals are called ‘glass boys’ or ‘crystal boys’.”

December 1937. The Japanese have taken Nanking. A group of terrified schoolgirls hides in the compound of an American church. Among them is Shujuan, through whose thirteen-year-old eyes we witness the shocking events that follow. Run by Father Engelmann, an American priest who has been in China for many years, the church is supposedly neutral ground in the war between China and Japan. But it becomes clear the Japanese are not obeying international rules of engagement. As they pour through the streets of Nanking, raping and pillaging the civilian population, the girls are in increasing danger. And their safety is further compromised when prostitutes from the nearby brothel climb over the wall into the compound seeking love. Short, powerful, vivid, this beautiful novel transports the reader to 1930s China. Full of wonderful characters, from the austere priest to the irrelevant prostitutes, it is a story about how war upsets all prejudices and how love can flourish amidst death.

From one of our most celebrated contemporary writers, winner of the National Book Award and PEN/Faulkner Award: Ha Jin’s staggering story “Alive,” from the collection The Bridegroom. Tong Guh-an is a regular businessman, husband, and father, trying to find a job for his daughter and an apartment for his war in rural China. He’s next in line to be Vice Director of the cannery where he works. One morning in late July he makes the eleven hour train trip from Muji City to Taifu, to conduct business for his company that he hopes will finally lead to a promotion and the easy life. The events that follow are nothing short of astonishing, as the very earth shifts under Guhan’s feet. This is Ha Jin’s moving, strange, captivating story of an earthquake and a common man, the ties of family and the powers of circumstance: the perfect introduction to an internationally acclaimed modern master. An eBook short.

Stories

A Novel

Crystal Boys

A Map of Betrayal

Under the Red Flag

“Papa explains the war like this: ‘When the elephants dance, the chickens must be careful.’ The great beasts, as they circle one another, shaking the trees and trumpeting loudly, are the Amerikanos and the Japanese as they fight. And our Philippine Islands? We are the small chickens.” Once in a great while comes a storyteller who can illuminate worlds large and small, in ways both magical and true to life. When the Elephants Dance is set in the waning days of World War II, as the Japanese and the Americans engage in a fierce battle for possession of the Philippine Islands. Through the eyes of three narrators, thirteen-year-old Alejandro Karangalan, his spirited older sister Isabelle, and Domingo, a passionate guerrilla commander, we see how ordinary people find hope for survival where none seems to exist. While the Karangalan family and their neighbors huddle together for survival in the cellar of a house, they tell magical stories to one another based on Filipino myth that transport the listeners from the chaos of the war around them and give them new resolve to continue fighting. Outside the safety of their refuge the war rages on—fiery bombs torch the countryside, Japanese soldiers round up and interrogate innocent people, and from the hills guerrilla fighters wage a desperate campaign against the enemy. Inside the cellar, these men, women, and children put their hopes and dreams on hold as they wait out the war. This stunning debut novel celebrates wit and richness and depth the spirit of the Filipino people and their fascinating story and marks the introduction of an author who will join the ranks of writers such as Arundhati Roy, Mani Suri, and Amy Tan.

Winner of the PEN/Hemingway Award The place is the chilly border between Russia and China. The time is the early 1970s when the two giants were poised on the brink of war. And the characters in this thrilling collection of stories are Chinese soldiers who must constantly scrutinize the enemy even as they themselves are watched for signs of the fatal disease of bourgeois liberalism. In Ocean of Words, the Chinese writer Ha Jin explores the predicament of these simple, barely literate men with breathtaking concision and humanity. From amorous telegraphers to a pugacious militiaman, from an inscrutable Russian prisoner to an effeminate but enthusiastic recruit, Ha Jin’s characters possess a depth and liveliness that suggest Isaac Babel’s Cossacks and Tim O’Brien’s GIs. Ocean of Words is a triumphant volume, poignant, hilarious, and harrowing. “A compelling collection of stories, powerful in their unity of theme and rich in their diversity of styles.” —New York Times Book Review “Extraordinary. . . . [These stories are shot through with wit and offer glimpses of human motivation that defy retelling. . . . Read them all.” —Boston Globe “An exceptional new talent, capable of wringing rich surprises out of austere materials.” —Portland Oregonian

Beijing intellectual Chen Zhen volunteers to live in a remote settlement on the border of Inner and Outer Mongolia, where he discovers life of apparent idyllic simplicity amongst the nomads and the wild wolves who roam the plains. But when members of the People’s Republic swarm in from the cities to bring modernity and productivity to the grasslands, the peace of Chen’s solitary existence is shattered, and the delicate balance between humans and nature, the tell magical stories to one another based on Filipino myth that transport the listeners from the chaos of the war around them and give them new resolve to continue fighting. Outside the safety of their refuge the war rages on—fiery bombs torch the countryside, Japanese soldiers round up and interrogate innocent people, and from the hills guerrilla fighters wage a desperate campaign against the enemy. Inside the cellar, these men, women, and children put their hopes and dreams on hold as they wait out the war. This stunning debut novel celebrates wit and richness and depth the spirit of the Filipino people and their fascinating story and marks the introduction of an author who will join the ranks of writers such as Arundhati Roy, Mani Suri, and Amy Tan.

From the National Book Award-winning author of Waiting: a narratively driven, deeply human biography of the Tang dynasty poet Li Bai—also known as Li Po. In his own time (701–762), Li Bai’s poems—shaped by Daoist thought and characterized by their passion, romance, and lust for life—were never given their proper due by the official literary gatekeepers. Nonetheless, his lines rang out on the lips of court entertainers, tavern singers, soldiers, and writers throughout the Tang dynasty, and his deep desire for a higher, more perfect world gave rise to his nickname, the Banished Immortal. Today, Bai’s verses are still taught to China’s schoolchildren and recited at parties and toasts; they remain an inextricable part of the Chinese language. With the instincts of a master novelist, Ha Jin draws on a wide range of historical and literary sources to weave the great poet’s life story. He follows Bai from his origins on the western frontier to his ramblings travels as a young man, which were filled with filled with striving but also with merry abandon, as he raised cups of wine with friends and fellow poets. Ha Jin also takes us through the poet’s later years—in which he became swept up in a military rebellion that altered the course of China’s history—and the mysterious circumstances of his death, which are surrounded by legend. The Banished Immortal is an extraordinary portrait of a poet who both transcended his time and was shaped by it, and whose ability to live, love, and mourn without reservation produced some of the most enduring verses.