The Departure Lounge

Eggers, Paul

Published by The Ohio State University Press

Eggers, Paul.
The Departure Lounge: Stories and a Novella.
The Ohio State University Press, 2009.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/27812.

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The Ohio State University Prize in Short Fiction

“The Departure Lounge is a long exhale from an author who has been to the darkest places the world has to offer, and spent many years reflecting on what he saw there. These are sad stories, not without hope or laughter, but stories from that reckoning time of life when the awful things that happened ‘over there’ are finally understood to be events that did not just happen in those other, tropical, foreign places, but are happening now and now and now in our hearts, and in our memory. And what’s most moving about these stories is Eggers’ knowledge that the refugee camp, the war front, the city under siege, the soldier’s baton on the back of a friend, will always continue to happen no matter how far away in our lives we have returned from them, no matter how often we tell ourselves, ‘That was another life.’ The Departure Lounge is a beautiful book, as difficult personally for me to read as it was to put down.”


“Paul Eggers continues to be one of the most interesting voices in American fiction writing about the collision of cultures and the search for identity that lie deep at the center of the crucial twenty-first-century issues of immigration and diversity. And he writes with great perception and nuance and an abiding compassion, finding our shared humanity, which animates all great fiction. The Departure Lounge is a splendid collection, and Eggers is a writer who needs to be widely heard.”

—Robert Olen Butler, author of Pulitzer Prize-winning A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain

“Paul Eggers is one of the most sure-handed writers around. Most impressive, in this stunning new collection, is the depth of characterization. Again and again, his characters react in surprising yet thoroughly convincing ways. These stories will remain with me a long, long time.”

—Steve Yarbrough, author of Prisoners of War (2004), Visible Spirits (2001), and The Oxygen Man (1999)

Paul Eggers is the author of the novel Saviors and the short-story collection How the Water Feels. He teaches English in California.