



Letters From Cairo (Arab American Writing)

Pauline Kaldas

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When her husband is offered a six-month Fulbright grant to teach American literature at Cairo University, Pauline Kaldas embarks on a new journey-and an opportunity to return home. Born in Egypt, she immigrated with her parents to the United States when she was eight years old. Returning now with her own children, Kaldas writes from a perspective as an Arab American, straddling two homelands and two identities. Through a collection of letters, journal entries, essays, and even local recipes, she provides a richly detailed portrait of life in Cairo, recording daily revelations and eventually reconciling past and present. With keen observation and deeply personal reflections, the author presents a thoughtful meditation on the meaning of place, family, and origin.

Kaldas offers insight into the complexities of Egyptian culture, alternately taking on roles of linguist and cultural interpreter and addressing everything from class issues and political activism to education and the impact of Western culture. But it is her moving, often entertaining letters and her children's emails and poems that will charm readers and resonate with devotees of travel narratives and multicultural literature. This book captures the images, character, and passion of an extraordinary country. Marked by spare, graceful prose, drawing on observations and friendships past and present, Kaldas offers a unique lens for observing Middle Eastern societies, one that the reader will not soon forget.

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