The Heartbeat of Iran
Real Voices Of A Country and Its People

Tara Kangarlou

The Heartbeat of Iran offers an intimate look at the ordinary people that make up one of the most mysterious and isolated countries in the world.

In today’s interconnected global village, Iran remains a mystery to much of the rest of the world—especially to those living in the United States. While the country is often synonymous with rogue behavior on the world stage, there is also another, rarely seen side to this nation of eighty million, including being home to the greatest number of Jews in the Middle East outside of Israel, and having the largest transsexual population in the region, among other unexpected surprises.

The Heartbeat of Iran takes us on a journey into everyday life in Iran, where we meet the diverse people who make up the country’s delicate socio-cultural, political, and religious mosaic. Through portraits of thirty-five regular Iranians—from a blind Sunni environmental activist to the gay son of a general, from Iran’s first female race car driver to a young rabbi who is training the future generation of Jewish rabbis in Israel’s enemy state—The Heartbeat of Iran reveals a people whose dreams and fears mirror that of millions of others worldwide, and who yearn to join an international community that often views them through the blur of a hostile political fog.

Tara Kangarlou is an award-winning journalist who has reported on domestic and international issues for CNN, NBC Los Angeles, Huffington Post, Al Monitor, NewsMax, Al Jazeera America, and other outlets. She is currently a fellow at the prestigious East West Institute, and also holds a McCain Institute Fellowship on International Leadership. Tara was the recipient of the 2018 Ted Sorensen Award from Network 20/20 for her impact journalism and humanitarian work in conflict zones. In 2016, she founded ART OF HOPE, which supports Syrian refugees. Tara was born and raised in Tehran, and currently splits her time between London and New York.
Ghostlove
Dennis Mahoney

The Ocean at the End of the Lane and Welcome to Night Vale meet in a very unique haunted house in Upstate New York.

Previous Praise for Dennis Mahoney:

“Fellow Mortals, while full of vivid interactions, is perhaps most moving in its subtle depiction of people alone, trying to find ordinary meaning amid disarray.” —The New York Times

“Quietly powerful. . . . With the barest glimmer of hope to buoy the calamities of his deeply earnest, lyrical story, Mahoney can share shelf space with Dave Eggers and Stewart O’Nan.” —Booklist, starred review

William Rook is an occultist living in a haunted brownstone in upstate New York. There he has encountered many marvelous and confusing occurrences: an ever-shifting bloodstain on his study floor; his own cynical doppelgänger; a three-winged pigeon; and, most importantly, June, the ghost living in his bedroom. June is everything William has hoped to find—by turns playful and serious, petulant and flirtatious. But she is also secretive and sad, trapped in a hopeless limbo, her past a mystery she won’t reveal. William becomes determined to help her, engaging daily in a series of experiments, rituals, and spells. But success means letting June move on, and the more William learns of her past and present, the less sure he is that he’s ready to let her go.

Dennis Mahoney is the author of two previous novels—Fellow Mortals (FSG, 2013), a Booklist Top Ten Debut, and Bell Weather (Holt, 2015), an Indie Next Pick. He is also the Secretary of the Equinox Society, a carefully curated creative brand and real-world experience. He lives with his family in Troy, New York.
A Short Move
Katherine Hill

A Visit From the Goon Squad meets Friday Night Lights
in this story of the joys, sorrows, and physical and emotional sacrifices of a star football player.

“In this audacious new novel, football is not only the subject, but a lens through which Katherine Hill examines contemporary life under capitalism. In Hill’s sharply observed, brilliant prose, this ur-American game ultimately becomes a metaphor for human relationships, for the ecstasy and vulnerability within the body, and for life itself. This is a beautifully written novel about loss and endurance, about men and women doing the best they can with the gifts they’ve been given.”—René Steinke, author of Friendswood

In a small Virginia town in 1971, a high school football star runs out on his pregnant girlfriend. Six years later, that child meets his father for the first time and discovers the athlete within. Before long he is on the fast-track to the NFL, coached by a relentless Vietnam veteran uncle, nourished by a patient working mom, and defended by an ambitious girlfriend, all of whom tie their own hopes to his career. When he finally makes it, as Mitch “Wilk” Wilkins, New England’s fearsome middle linebacker, it all seems preordained. Then, almost immediately, his life begins to fall apart: a billionaire owns him, his marriage is on the rocks, and his body is betraying him in stages. As Mitch and his wounded family press on, seeking meaning in a relentlessly incentive-driven and forward-moving life, the sacrifices necessary for success in sports—and in attaining the “American Dream”—are laid painfully and tragically bare.

Vladimir Nabokov’s Speak, Memory: Bookmarked
Sven Birkerts

Vladimir Nabokov’s Speak, Memory is one of the most critically acclaimed memoirs of the twentieth century. In this classic account of his life, Nabokov writes about his idyllic Russian childhood, the 1917 Bolshevik revolution that led to his exile from Russia, and the path that would eventually lead him to live in the United States.

In the latest volume in Ig’s Bookmarked series, celebrated critic Sven Birkerts writes about how Speak, Memory not only intersects with various central life-concerns (exile, serendipity and coincidence, childhood, literary redemption), but is also vital to understanding the workings of memory in literature.

Sven Birkerts is the editor of AGNI. His most recent books are Changing the Subject: Art and Attention in the Internet, The Other Walk, Art of Time in Memoir: Then, Again, and Reading Life: Books for the Ages, all published by Graywolf. He has won the Citation for Excellence in Reviewing from the National Book Critics Circle and the Spielvogel-Diamonstein Award from PEN for the best book of essays. He is the former director of the Bennington Writing Seminars, and has been a member of the faculty since its founding. Sven lives in Arlington, Massachusetts, with his family.

Alice Walker’s The Color Purple: Bookmarked
Bernice L. McFadden

Alice Walker’s The Color Purple is one of the most celebrated and groundbreaking novels of the past forty years. The book tells the story of Celie, an African American teenager raised in rural isolation in Georgia, who narrates her life through painfully honest letters to God. Later made into a film starring Whoopi Goldberg and a Broadway musical, The Color Purple has endured as a true American classic.

In this entry in Ig’s Bookmarked series, award-winning author Bernice L. McFadden writes about how The Color Purple has changed the world of literature, as well as the enormous effect that the novel has had on her evolution as a writer.

Bernice L. McFadden is the author of The Book of Harlan, winner of the 2017 American Book Award and the 2017 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work. Among her other critically acclaimed novels are Praise Song for the Butterflies, Sugar, Loving Donovan, Gathering of Waters (one of the 100 Notable Books of 2012), and Glorious, which was a finalist for the NAACP Image Award. She is a four-time Hurston/Wright Legacy Award finalist, as well as the recipient of three awards from the Black Caucus of the American Library Association.

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