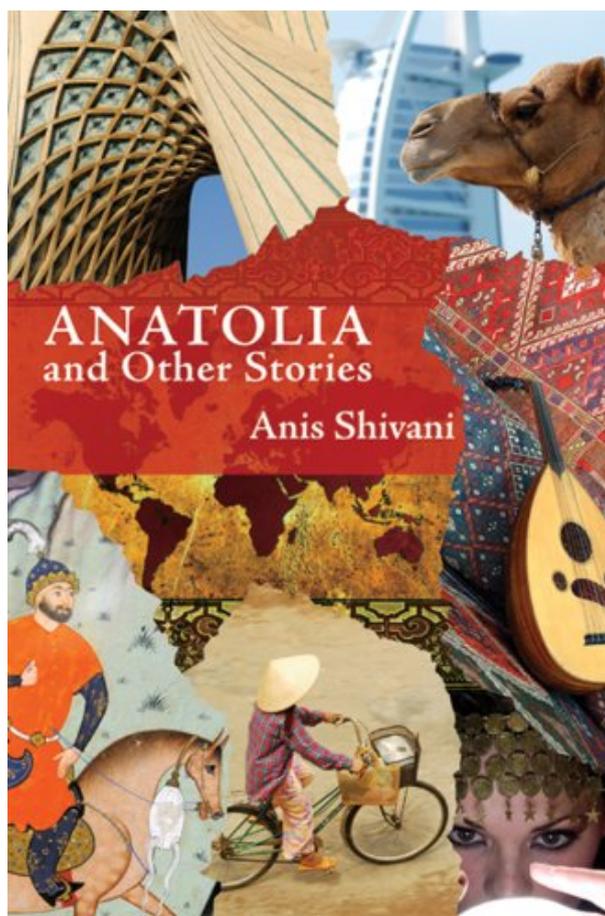
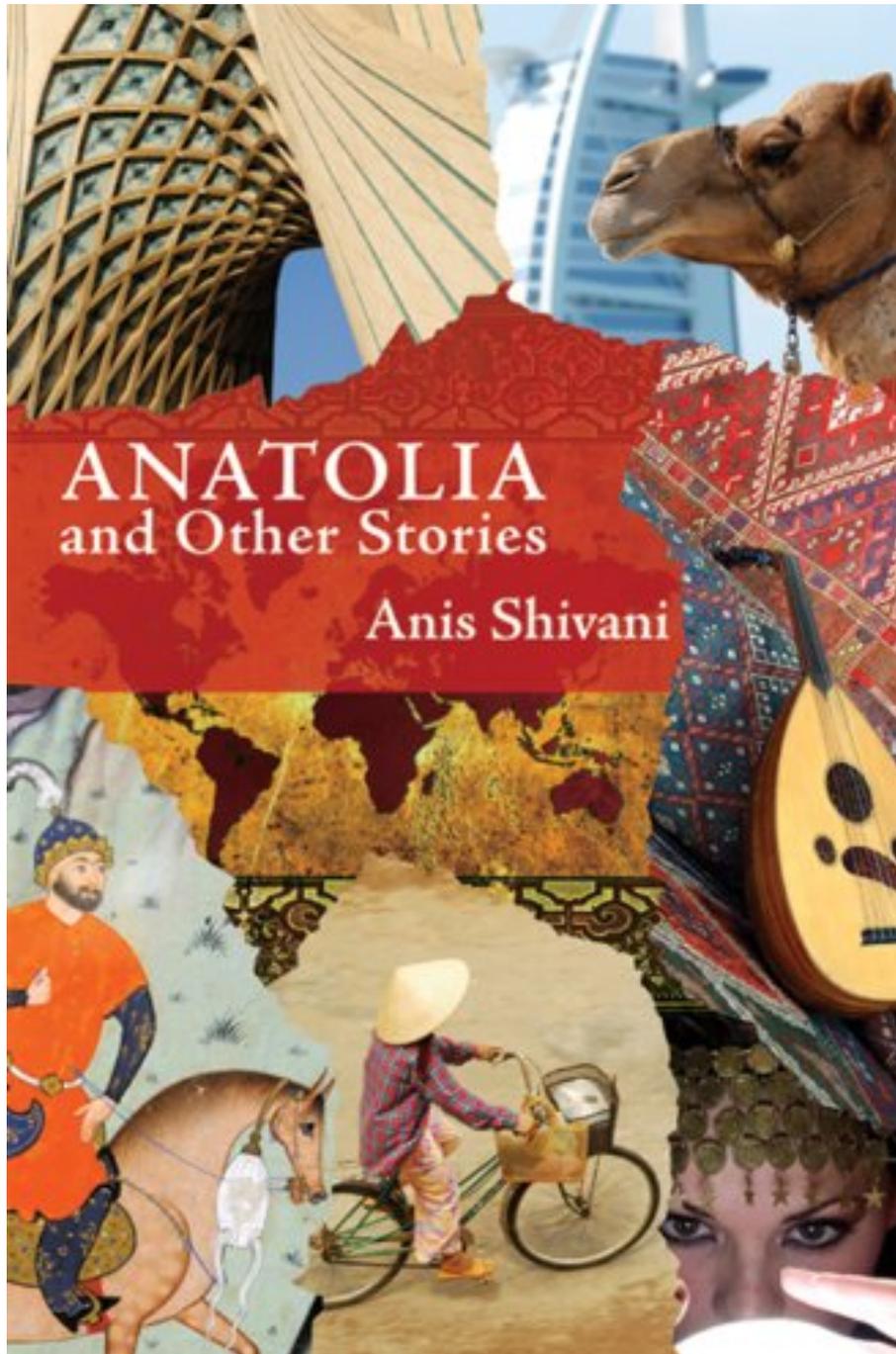


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### About the Author

Anis Shivani is a fiction writer, poet, and critic in Houston, Texas. His stories appear in Other Voices, Crazyhorse, Stand, Confrontation, River City, South Dakota Review, and elsewhere. One of his stories won special mention for the 2008 Pushcart Prize.

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“Imaginative, informed, at times brash, Anis Shivani will go far.”—The Brooklyn Rail

In these eleven stories of novelistic breadth and ambition, global tensions and harmonies come alive as rarely seen in contemporary fiction. Shivani takes the measure of the fallout from globalization as well as its advantages, exploring diverse cultures to gauge their ultimate resiliencies.

An undocumented Indian worker in Dubai, an Issei man in a California internment camp, a persecuted Baha’i novelist in contemporary Tehran, a Chinese-American conservator at a Boston museum, a Hungarian gypsy girl in 1950s rural Indiana, a dissatisfied Muslim industrialist in post-independence India, and a loyal-to-the-core Jewish trader in the Ottoman empire—these are the kinds of strong, sympathetic, fully realized characters who bridge place and individuality in this powerful collection.

The genre of multicultural/postcolonial short fiction will never be the same again. These stories push us to confront the hardest intellectual challenges of the emerging world, while never letting go of narrative urgency, concision, and lyrical power.

“Anis Shivani demonstrates his versatility as a writer as he takes us around the globe in stories that juxtapose old and new, east and west, with characters that do their best to navigate the generational/religious/cultural/socio-economic tensions inherent in our global economy. Shivani’s observations are dead-on, especially when dealing with themes of loss, family dynamics, and the subtleties of power. This is a solid collection that offers the best of all worlds: skilled writing flavored with detailed cultural nuances in stories that are timeless and universal.”—Laila Halaby, PEN/Beyond Margins Award-winning author of *Once in a Promised Land*

“Anis Shivani has an enviable narrative reach. He populates worlds that are psychologically compelling, socially acute, and morally challenging. Reading *Anatolia and Other Stories*, we feel that life has been lived deeply and then—the hard part—served up fresh to the senses.”—Sven Birkerts, author of *The Gutenberg Elegies* and *My Sky Blue Trades*

“I’ve read these stories with intense interest. Anis Shivani is an original, and his work interrogates the historical moment with insight and passion. He looks at this mysterious thing called ‘multiculturalism’ with a fresh eye, never accepting the status quo, always probing and thinking. The forces that keep a lid on emerging thought, on sharp political thinking, had better take cover. This is unusual and interesting work.”—Jay Parini, author of *Benjamin’s Crossing* and *The Apprentice Lover*

“Anis Shivani’s debut collection of stories reveals him to be one of the most exciting young writers in the States. What I especially admire in his work is the seamless union of his extraordinary intelligence with his intensely empathetic feelings for his characters and for the endlessly mysterious experience of existence itself.”—Richard Burgin, author of *The Identity Club* and *The Conference on Beautiful Moments*

“In *Anatolia and Other Stories*, Anis Shivani does no less than deliver a world. Read together, these smart, sure stories form wild, magnetic patterns on the brain; I’m left believing that seemingly random occurrences

might add up to something more than what I'd imagined.”—Julie Shigekuni, PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Award-winning author of *Invisible Gardens*

“Contemporary American fiction tends to favor style over substance, inactivity over action, ambivalence over judgment, irony over assertion, solipsism over a wide and encompassing worldview. As Nobel secretary Horace Engdahl recently noted, the U.S. doesn't participate in the world's ongoing literary dialogue. But now comes Anis Shivani and his first book of fiction, *Anatolia and Other Stories*. Already known for his penetrating, erudite, and brutally honest literary essays, Shivani has now joined the ranks of America's best fictioneers. The echoes we hear in these short stories harken back to the masters, Chekhov, Anderson, Kleist, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Flaubert, James, Kipling and Sartre. No postmodern games here, no winking coyness—just solid, international storytelling. No new voice in recent memory is as weighted with intelligence and understanding of the human animal as that of Anis Shivani. To be sure, Engdahl spoke too soon.”—Eric Miles Williamson, PEN/Hemingway Award-finalist author of *East Bay Grease*

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#### Most helpful customer reviews

7 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

##### Takes You Places

By Gail Vida Hamburg

One reads fiction to be carried away to other places and other times, and into other lives. Anis Shivani's *Anatolia and Other Stories* takes us everywhere. It follows an Issei man to an internment camp in California, an undocumented Indian worker from Trivandrum to Dubai, a desperate small town writer to a writing conference in Vermont, a persecuted Bahai writer in today's Tehran, and immigrant Americans of color on a repatriation scheme to Africa. Worlds collide; status, class, gender and race agitate in a fusion chamber. People who start out good enough end up far from home, adrift, unmoored. A babysitter from Bristol, CT tends to the child of elite Malaysians living in Houston, a Vietnamese boy finds a home in the middle of a marital faultline between two academics in Madison, WI. A couple of stories are so chilling, they remind you of Kafka or Saramago, others are delicately wrought, elegant, and quiet like a Chekhov tale, several are political and moral in dimension. This is advanced storytelling by a writer of formidable intelligence, control, grace, and rapier wit.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

A decent anthology, worth it if you're curious about this critics other work

By Jon

Shivani is a great critic, and after reading some of his other work I wanted to check out his fiction.

Unfortunately, this collection isn't up to the same standards as his criticism. With a couple notable exceptions, these stories read as if it's Shivani talking directly to the reader no matter which character is speaking. And I don't mean that in a good way. It's as if the settings and 2-dimensional dialogue are set dressing for Shivani to discuss various topics. Other authors do this, of course, but the story serves to reveal the authors point on the readers own terms. The story is what grabs the readers attention, and the point is made before the reader realizes it. With Anatolia, that dynamic is flipped. The dialogue is to prescient, and his characters choices don't feel real. The stories come across as an afterthought, a convenient platter with which to serve up Shivani's thoughts on the world. They're good thoughts, too! They just don't make compelling reading in this form.

The anthology starts off with the not-quite-awful Dubai and Manzanar. Things get a bit better with Conservation, better still with Profession, before finally reaching a peak with Go Sell It On The Mountain. Mountain is a great story, and I think what makes it so is that Shivani is writing about writing -- something he's very good at. His other stories require him to write about a life he can empathize with, but doesn't know innately, and they suffer for it. Not so with Mountain, this story is full of pathos, humor, and well-placed criticism and is worth the price of admission.

Following Mountain are a couple iffy stories, the eponymous Anatolia and Independence. Things improve again with Repatriation, and the final three (Texas, Gypsy, and Tehran) are a mixed bag, with Gypsy the highlight.

11 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

The world has so much to offer

By Reading Wasp

Every country, every nation, every civilization, has had minorities living in its midst. But sadly the stories of these outsiders are often swept over and ignored. In this collection Anis Shivani takes the reader on a journey around the world -- and into the past -- in order to bring many of these suppressed stories to life. A Jew living in the Ottoman Empire; A Japanese man interned by WWII America; a Romanian gypsy in the American midwest; an Indian man living in Arab city of Dubai; a group of dissidents in revolutionary Iran; a young Southerner trying to break into a largely East Coast literary community, are just some of these stories.

There is no element of pretense or pontificating. Just good, clean story-telling, put forth by an informed and humane narrator. The locations are exotic, but the themes are universal.

Although this book is being offered as a collection of short stories I think the obvious link -- multiculturalism in multiple civilizations -- makes it seem more like a novel. Its as if the characters are sitting around the fire and telling their experiences to one another.

What I liked most about this book is that it is not about the past, but about the future. As "whites" become a minority in America in the near future, they will want to learn the lessons that other minorities have learned. This book can be very helpful.

See all 4 customer reviews...

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