



Baghdad: The City in Verse

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Baghdad: The City in Verse captures the essence of life lived in one of the world's great enduring metropolises. In this unusual anthology, Reuven Snir offers original translations of more than 170 Arabic poems--most of them appearing for the first time in English--which represent a cross-section of genres and styles from the time of Baghdad's founding in the eighth century to the present day. The diversity of the fabled city is reflected in the Bedouin, Muslim, Christian, Kurdish, and Jewish poets featured here, including writers of great renown and others whose work has survived but whose names are lost to history.

Through the prism of these poems, readers glimpse many different Baghdads: the city built on ancient Sumerian ruins, the epicenter of Arab culture and Islam's Golden Age under the enlightened rule of Harun al-Rashid, the bombed-out capital of Saddam Hussein's fallen regime, the American occupation, and life in a new but unstable Iraq. With poets as our guides, we visit bazaars, gardens, wine parties, love scenes (worldly and mystical), brothels, prisons, and palaces. Startling contrasts emerge as the day-to-day cacophony of urban life is juxtaposed with eternal cycles of the Tigris, and hellish winds, mosquitoes, rain, floods, snow, and earthquakes are accompanied by somber reflections on invasions and other catastrophes.

Documenting the city's 1,250-year history, *Baghdad: The City in Verse* shows why poetry has been aptly called the public register of the Arabs.

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