BKLYN BOOK CLUB KIT

THE WILD FOX
OF YEMEN: POEMS

THREA ALMONTASER

2021 BROOKLYN PUBLIC
LIBRARY BOOK PRIZE WINNER
BOOK SYNOPSIS

By turns aggressively reckless and fiercely protective, always guided by faith and ancestry, Threa Almontaser’s incendiary debut asks how mistranslation can be a form of self-knowledge and survival. A love letter to the country and people of Yemen, a portrait of young Muslim womanhood in New York after 9/11 and an extraordinarily composed examination of what it means to carry in the body the echoes of what came before, Almontaser’s polyvocal collection sneaks artifacts to and from worlds, repurposing language and adapting to the space between cultures.

Half-crunk and hungry, speakers move with the force of what cannot be contained by the limits of the American imagination. Instead, they invest in troublemaking and trickery, navigate imperial violence across multiple accents and anthems, and apply gang signs in henna, utilizing any means necessary to form a semblance of home. In doing so, The Wild Fox of Yemen fearlessly rides the tension between carnality and tenderness in the unruly human spirit.
AUTHOR BIO: THREA ALMONTASER

Threa Almontaser is a Yemeni American author from New York City. Almontaser’s debut collection of poetry, The Wild Fox of Yemen, was selected for the 2020 Walt Whitman Award of the Academy of American Poets by Harryette Mullen. Her work can be found in Adroit Journal, Passages North, Diode Poetry Journal, The Rumpus, wildness and elsewhere. She lives in Raleigh, North Carolina.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THREA AT THREAWRITES.COM & IN SELECT INTERVIEWS:

THE RUMPUS - "The Rumpus Poetry Book Club Chat with Threa Almontaser"

AL JAZEERA - "Poet Threa Almontaser’s 'love letter to Yemen''"

POETS & WRITERS - "A Freeing Space: Our Seventeenth Annual Look at Debut Poets"

BKLYN BOOK CLUB KIT: THE WILD FOX OF YEMEN
1. *The Wild Fox of Yemen* is broken into three sections, each introduced with a photograph. Across these three sections, what differences do you notice? Are there particular poems near the beginning or end of the book that seem to be in conversation with one another?

2. Along with her own poetry, Threa Almontaser has included her translations of “When People Are Cursed” and “Why I Am Silent About the Lament” by Yemeni poet Abdullah Al-Baradouni. Given the book’s themes of ancestry and migration, how do these translations affect your reading of the other poems in the collection?

3. In addition to English, many of these poems use Arabic script as well as anglicized words from the Arabic language. Whether or not you’re able to read or understand the Arabic, how does its inclusion function in these poems?

4. *The Wild Fox of Yemen* is notable for the formal range of its poems. Some seem to cascade and swirl down pages, while others are written in conventional couplets, prose or arranged to resemble images. Why might the poet have chosen these forms for the words they contain? How do these formal inventions add to the range of subjects and themes she explores?
LEARN MORE ABOUT YEMEN

In *The Wild Fox of Yemen*, Almontaser explores the culture, history and identity of Yemeni life through both English and Arabic prose.

Yemen is a country situated at the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula. It is mostly mountainous and generally arid, though there are broad patches with sufficient precipitation to make agriculture successful. The people speak various dialects of Arabic, and are mostly Muslim.

— Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

Yemen map showing major population centers as well as parts of neighboring countries and the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. The World Factbook.

Head to [aljazeera.com/where/yemen](http://aljazeera.com/where/yemen) for more up-to-date news and information.

BKLYN BOOK CLUB KIT: THE WILD FOX OF YEMEN
BKLYN BOOKMATCH READALIKES

Did you enjoy *The Wild Fox of Yemen*? Want to read something similar? Check out these readalike titles below.

- *Floaters: Poems* by Martín Espada
- *Pilgrim Bell: Poems* by Kaveh Akbar
- *Return: Why We Go Back to Where We Come From* by Kamal Al-Solaylee
- *Field Study* by Chet’la Sebree
- *How to Be a Muslim: An American Story* by Haroon Moghul
- *Excellent Daughters: The Secret Lives of Young Women Who Are Transforming the Arab World* by Katherine Zoepf
- *How to Cure a Ghost* by Fariha Róisín
- *Bless the Daughter Raised by a Voice in Her Head: Poems* by Warsan Shire

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