



The Crossing: My Journey to the Shattered Heart of Syria

Samar Yazbek

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Samar Yazbek was well-known in her native Syria as a writer and a journalist but, in 2011, she fell foul of the Assad regime and was forced to flee. Since then, determined to bear witness to the suffering of her people, she revisited her homeland by squeezing through a hole in the fence on the Turkish border. Here she testifies to the appalling reality that is Syria today. From the first innocent demonstrations for democracy, through the beginnings of the Free Syrian Army, to the arrival of ISIS, she offers remarkable snapshots of soldiers, children, ordinary men and women simply trying to stay alive. Some of these stories are of hardship and brutality that is hard to bear, but she also gives testimony to touches of humanity along the way: how people live under the gaze of a sniper, how principled young men try to resist orders from their military superiors, how children cope in bunkers. Yazbek's portraits of life in Syria are very real, and her prose, luminous. *The Crossing* is undoubtedly both an important historical document and a work of literature.

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