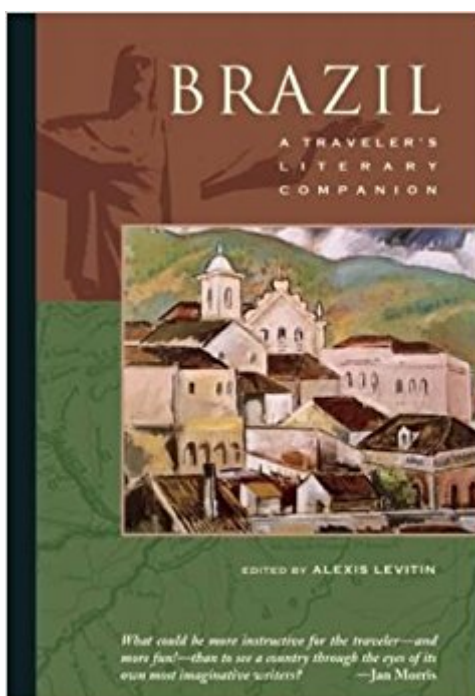


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Brazil: A Traveler's Literary Companion (Traveler's Literary Companions)



Synopsis

This vital collection is as eclectic and electric as Brazil itself. These stories — ranging from vignettes, sketches, and prose poems to traditional narratives — cover a wide geography, physically, thematically, and stylistically. Tales of nature and magic, humor and tragedy, brutality and delicacy, sex and violence are played out against every corner of this vast and diverse land: the , the Northeast, the Central West, and the South, as well as in Brazilâ™s two metropolises, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The earliest story, Machado de Assis' "The Wallet," was written at the end of the nineteenth century. The most recent were written especially for this book. Brazil is noted for its vibrant music and celebrations; this book shows an equally rich literary scene for the traveler or fan of world — and world-class — fiction.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Alexis Levitin is a recipient of two NEA translation fellowships and two Fulbright Lectureships, as well as residencies at the Banff International Literary Translation Centre, The European Translators Collegium in Germany, and The Ford Foundation retreat at Bellagio, Italy. His translations have appeared in more than two hundred magazines, including Kenyon Review, New England Review, Partisan Review, Prairie Schooner, New Letters, and American Poetry Review.

excellent

This book was published in 2010 and contained 36 works by 32 authors. There were 34 short stories and 2 excerpts from novels, as far as could be determined. The oldest authors were Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (1839-1908), described as Brazil's greatest writer of the 19th century; João Simões Lopes Neto (1865-1916), one of the most important authors from the land of the gauchos, Rio Grande do Sul; and João Guimarães Rosa (1908-67), called the nation's greatest modern writer, on a par with Joyce and Faulkner. The youngest included Fernando Bonassi (1962-), Flávio Carneiro (1962-) and Adriana Lisboa (1970-), called a new voice in the nation's literature. Among the others were Jorge Amado (1912-2001), the nation's best-known and most frequently translated 20th century author; José Jacinto Veiga (1915-99), called the father of Brazilian magic realism; Clarice Lispector (ca.1920-77), another celebrated modern author; Rubem Fonseca (1925-), considered a major Brazilian writer of the late 20th century; Dalton Trevisan (1925-), the nation's most prolific author of short stories; Moacyr Scliar (1937-), the major Brazilian-Jewish writer of the 20th century; João Ubaldo Ribeiro (1941-), a celebrated contemporary author; Luiz Vilela (1943-), something of a Brazilian Chekhov; Álvaro Cardoso Gomes (1944-), a writer of detective stories; Milton Hatoum (1952-), called an important voice from Amazônia and a representative of Brazilian Arab writers; and Luiz Ruffato (1961-). Of all the authors in the collection, 10 were women. The works ranged from the 1880s (Machado de Assis) to the 2000s. All but two or three were published between the 1960s and 2010, many of them within the last decade. The pieces were categorized by place: Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, the northeast, the central west, and the south. The stories most enjoyed were, for Rio, the one by Paula Parisot that described the gap between rich and poor ("Ipanema Is a Long Way from Home") and one by Luis Fernando Verissimo that poked fun at stereotypical characters from Brazil's two main cities ("The Real José"). For São Paulo, one by Julieta de Godoy Ladeira about a loveless marriage among the upper middle class ("The Virtuous Wife"); one by Marcus Rey about a ne'er-do-well from the countryside who kept up his optimism in the face of every failed scheme ("Architect by Correspondence"); one on violent crime by Cardoso Gomes ("The Piece"); and Ruffato's monologue by a cab driver who revealed his entire life to his fare ("Taxi"). Among stories set in the central west, one by Vilela depicted a boy's struggle to come to terms with death ("Shaving"); one by Veiga showed people trying to understand the arrival of a mysterious contraption in their backwater town ("The Misplaced Machine"); and one by Guimarães Rosa narrated an old woman's memories of struggle against a coarse family of in-laws ("Those Lopes"). Stylistically, the most interesting for this reader was one by Benedicto Monteiro, which

described a sunset in the ("blue-halo-blue, almost-reflected-blue, blue-ray-blue, wandering-blue, absent-blue, blue-turning-white, blue-turning-ash, blue-turning-to-shadow, shadow-blue, blue-of-blue-shadow, shadow-almost-shadow, shadow-in-water, shadow-shadow . . ."); the monologue by Ruffato; and a minute description of an incident at a traffic light in Rio by Helena Parente Cunha ("Between the feet writhing near the body spread loose on the asphalt, rolls the high-heeled sandal with its clasp of little stones of colored glass. A sudden man throws himself on the silvery plastic purse and runs off, pushing aside person and people, forward and back. From inside the purse two little identification photos fall out onto the roughness of the asphalt. A boy about five years old. A woman about eighty"). Problems of the collection for this reader were that the contributions by some writers were the shortest of vignettes (Lisboa, Gã es, Carneiro, Prado and Bonassi, whose contribution was 12 lines long). These plus a few others just didn't seem to reveal very much about Brazil and were unsatisfying as stories (Coutinho, Hatoum, Denser, Cabreira, de Haro, Tezza). Omitted from the collection were authors like Graciliano Ramos (1892-1953) and JosÃ© Lins do RÃ£go (1901-57), two of the great chroniclers of Brazil's northeast; Erico VerÃ-ssimo (1905-75), who wrote beautifully on Rio de Janeiro, among other things; JosÃ© Carlos Cavalcanti Borges (1910-83); Murilo RubiÃ£o (1916-91), a master of the fantastic; Carlos Vasconcelos Maia (1923-); NÃ©lida PiÃ on (1937-); and Paulo Lins (1958-), author of City of God. Other recent collections of Brazilian writers include the Oxford Anthology of the Brazilian Short Story (2006) and Urban Voices: Contemporary Short Stories from Brazil (1999). Among older collections for the region, the Borzoi Anthology of Latin American Literature, Vol. 2 (1977) excerpts a number of Brazilian writers, including the poets Manuel Bandeira, Oswald de Andrade, Mario de Andrade, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Vincius de Moraes, LÃ£do Ivo and Haroldo de Campos. And Hammock beneath the Mangoes (1991) includes writers in the present collection (Machado de Assis, GuimarÃ£es Rosa, Amado, Lispector, Fonseca, Scliar and Ribeiro) as well as others like Murilo RubiÃ£o, Paulo Emilio Salles Gomes and Lygia Fagundes Telles.

With lush jungles, sunny beaches, and beautiful people, Brazil has made itself the ideal tourist attraction in South America, but what lies beneath? "Brazil: A Traveler's Literary Companion" delves into the literary side of Brazil, using its many attractions and much of its unique folklore as many authors provide short stories surrounding the country, providing a unique and strong outlook of the rainforests and the people of Brazil. Riveting, scholarly, and informative reading, "Brazil: A Traveler's Literary Companion" is very highly recommended.

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