



I Love Dollars and Other Stories of China (Weatherhead Books on Asia)

Wen Zhu

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In five richly imaginative novellas and a short story, Zhu Wen depicts the violence, chaos, and dark comedy of China in the post-Mao era. A frank reflection of the seamier side of his nation's increasingly capitalist society, Zhu Wen's fiction offers an audaciously plainspoken account of the often hedonistic individualism that is feverishly taking root.

Set against the mundane landscapes of contemporary China—a worn Yangtze River vessel, cheap diners, a failing factory, a for-profit hospital operating by dated socialist norms—Zhu Wen's stories zoom in on the often tragicomic minutiae of everyday life in this fast-changing country. With subjects ranging from provincial mafiosi to nightmarish families and oppressed factory workers, his claustrophobic narratives depict a spiritually bankrupt society, periodically rocked by spasms of uncontrolled violence.

For example, *I Love Dollars*, a story about casual sex in a provincial city whose caustic portrayal of numb disillusionment and cynicism, caused an immediate sensation in the Chinese literary establishment when it was first published. The novella's loose, colloquial voice and sharp focus on the indignity and iniquity of a society trapped between communism and capitalism showcase Zhu Wen's exceptional ability to make literary sense of the bizarre, ideologically confused amalgam that is contemporary China.

Julia Lovell's fluent translation deftly reproduces Zhu Wen's wry sense of humor and powerful command of detail and atmosphere. The first book-length publication of Zhu Wen's fiction in English, *I Love Dollars and Other Stories of China* offers readers access to a trailblazing author and marks a major contribution to Chinese literature in English.

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