



In Fond Remembrance of Me: A Memoir of Myth and Uncommon Friendship in the Arctic

Howard Norman

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Howard Norman spent the fall of 1977 in Churchill, Manitoba, translating into English two dozen "Noah stories" told to him by an Inuit elder. The folktales reveal what happened when the biblical Noah sailed his Ark into Hudson Bay in search of woolly mammoths and lost his way. By turns startling, tragic, and comical, these inimitable narratives tell the history of the Arctic and capture the collision of cultures precipitated by the arrival of a hapless stranger in a strange land.

Norman himself was then a stranger in a strange land, but he was not alone. In Churchill he encountered Helen Tanizaki, an Anglo-Japanese woman embarked on a similar project--to translate the tales into Japanese. An extraordinary linguist and an exact and compelling friend, Tanizaki became Norman's guide through the characters, stories, and customs he was coming to know, and a remarkable intimacy sprang up between them--all the more intense because it was to be fleeting; Tanizaki was fatally ill.

Through a series of overlapping panels of reality and memory, Norman recaptures with vivid immediacy a brief but life-shifting encounter and the earthy, robust stories that occasioned it.

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