



# My Father's Books

*Luan Starova*

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## **My Father's Books** Luan Starova

In *My Father's Books*, the first volume in Luan Starova's multivolume Balkan Saga, he explores themes of history, displacement, and identity under three turbulent regimes—Ottoman, Fascist, and Stalinist—in the twentieth century. Weaving a story from the threads of his parents' lives from 1926 to 1976, he offers a child's-eye view of personal relationships in shifting political landscapes and an elegiac reminder of the enduring power of books to sustain a literate culture.

Through lyrical waves of memory, Starova reveals his family's overlapping religious, linguistic, national, and cultural histories. His father left Constantinople as the Ottoman Empire collapsed, and the young family fled from Albania to Yugoslav Macedonia when Luan was a boy. His parents, cosmopolitan and well-traveled in their youth, and steeped in the cultures of both Orient and Occident, find themselves raising their children in yet another stagnant and repressive state. Against this backdrop, Starova remembers the protected spaces of his childhood—his mother's walled garden, his father's library, the cupboard holding the rarest and most precious of his father's books. Preserving a lost heritage, these books also open up a world that seems wide, deep, and boundless.

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