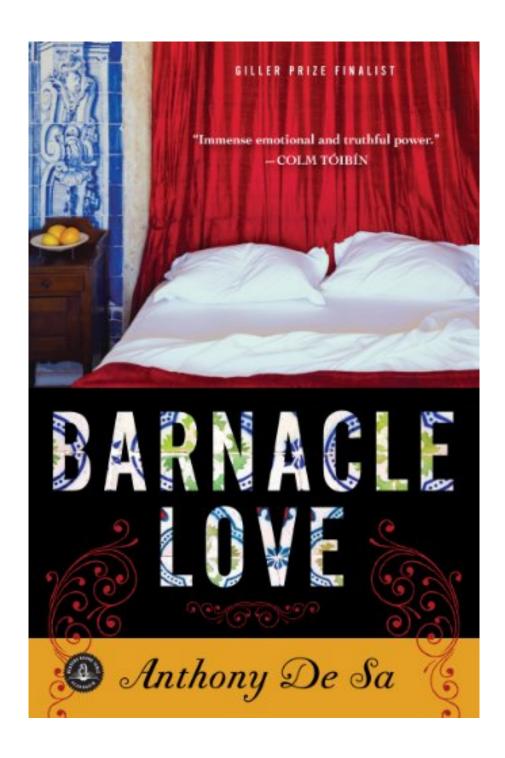


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Anthony De Sa makes his fiction debut with this stunning collection of interlinked stories that explore the innocent dreams and bitter disappointments of the immigrant experience. Hailed as "tender and raw, morbid and surprisingly gentle" by the Vancouver Sun, Barnacle Love was a finalist for Canada's highly prestigious Giller Prize.

Moving from a small Portuguese fishing village in the Azores to the shores of Newfoundland, Barnacle Love then takes us into the dark alleys of Toronto's Portuguese community in the 1970s. The first half of the book is told by Manuel Rebelo, who has fled his homeland? and the crushing weight of his mother's expectations? to build a future for himself in a new land. Manuel struggles hard to adjust, but fulfilling the promise of his adopted home is not as simple as he had hoped. The second half of the book is told with candor by Manuel's son Antonio, who? along with his sister and mother? lives in the shadows cast by Manuel's failures.

With fantastic, sometimes magical details and passionate empathy, Anthony De Sa invites readers into the lives of the Rebelo family. The results are, in the words of writer Nino Ricci, "haunting and elegiac."

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Chestnuts and fava bean folklore

By Tony Medeiros

Saudades is a vague and constant desire for something that does not and probably cannot exist, for something other than the present, a turning towards the past or towards the future; not an active discontent or poignant sadness but an indolent dreaming wistfulness. This was the feeling I got when I read Anthony De Sa's book called Barnacle Love.

Anthony De Sa is a Canadian author who writes about the Portuguese experience as told to him by his Iberian entourage who survived the immigrant experience from the Azores. His book Barnacle Love is a great expenditure in world literature and one to be proud as Portuguese of any decent, no matter how diluted your roots are from the source of your ancestry. It is a testament to their origins.

It is apropos to call the book Barnacle Love. Barnacles are some of the oldest living organisms in the ocean with thick shells and are vulnerable inside. They attach themselves to hard surfaces and don't budge from there. The Portuguese spirit is the same. When they are transfixed on an idea, they stay glued from the constant beating barrage of waves that come from the ocean. Be it faith or tradition they will not move. They don't want to let go. The ocean being the world of ideas tries to pull them to the sea. With no avail they stay true to their convictions. Fixed they are and they shall remain.

Books are vessels for your brain to traverse from one place to another. Your destination can be a place of

gratification or just plain exhaustion from frustration. Barnacle Love is unique because it speaks of the Azorean culture within Canada. There are not too many books on the spirit of the Azores. Anthony De Sa is a brilliant writer of ideas. His book is short of being called a novella. It is many stories combined to make one whole story. The book can be daunting at times with some fragmented meshing of these little tales like a tapestry that is interwoven into a bigger picture. It's as though there were many ideas for books within one book and stripped down to make a whole cohesive story.

I admire Barnacle Love for the visual poetic images the book is framed from. It is a very important book for the Azorean individual and should be read. The immigrant theme is what binds the book together. Barnacle Love is about identity. Lost identity and trying to find it in both the new world and the new one. The problem with immigrants is that they should realize that there is not a new or old world. There is only one global village out there. Anthony's stories were told to him in oral tradition and is the way of Portuguese romanticism. This longing for the past is true to their heart and is the thing that holds them back in Canada. Only recently have we started to see some connections to the Azores in the entertainment business. There are still more to discover.

Barnacle Love's inception was inspired by the 1977 brutal murder of Emanuel Jaques and defined the Azorean character, but it also retreated them even more backwards to stay away from the vile murder that shook a city and out-poured to other cities. Anthony promises to further explore this tragic pedophile murder of young innocence. His next book will dive deeper more into the Shoeshine Boy murder and really get inside the Portuguese community in Toronto. I really wanted more out of Barnacle Love. A magician cannot reveal all his tricks.

A Little Larger Than the Entire Universe: Selected Poems

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Captains Courageous

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

An Azorean Saga

By James W. Fonseca

A story of a Portuguese immigrant from the Azores islands to the Portuguese Community in St. John's, Newfoundland and then to Toronto. It's actually two stories - one of the father and one of the son. We compare the life of the immigrant father from a dirt-poor rural village where the only escape is to go to sea fishing, and the son who grows up in urban Toronto. The father struggles to maintain some of his traditional values; the son struggles to find any values. The writing is excellent (blurb by Colm Toibin) and is as much a collection of interrelated short stories as a novel. The Portuguese do whatever they have to do to survive: frugal rural life tending crops and animals; fishing for cod in an isolated dory in deadly seas, or being a custodian in urban Toronto. Like Home Is an Island: A Novel (Portuguese in the Americas Series) by Alfred Lewis, Saudade by Katherine Vaz and The Undiscovered Island (Portuguese in the Americas Series) by Darrell Kastin, this book is a part of the growing and excellent literature by Azoreans in the United States and Canada.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

It was sad to see that optimistic Manuel had turned into bitter ...

By Teena in Toronto

It's the 1950s in Portugal. As the oldest son, Manuel's mother has high hopes for him. Manual wants to leave his small village and experience the world so he gets a job on a fishing boat which will take him off the coast of Newfoundland. Despite the guilt that he feels about leaving his family and disappointing his mother, he settles in Canada and looks forward to the endless possibilities and making something of himself.

Fast forward and it's the 1970s and Manuel is now married, living in Toronto and has two children. They "live" in the Palmerston/Queen Street W area ... just east of my 'hood so I knew a lot of the landmarks mentioned. Though they (and the rest of his family) are now living in Toronto, they still have the same traditions from home such as butchering pigs in garages and making their own wine. None of Manuel's dreams have come true and he sees himself as a failure. He wants to make sure that same doesn't happen to his children. But the same pressures his mother put on him, he is putting on his son, Antonio. It was sad to see that optimistic Manuel had turned into bitter Manuel.

This is the second book I've read by this author. I had read Kicking the Sky (written in 2013) a couple years go, which took an experience from Barnacle Love and expanded on it.

It's a sad depressing story. I found the writing a bit draggy in places and it could have been tighter. It a bit confusing at times as the author jumped back and forth in time a bit. Manuel's story in the 1950s (the first part of the book) was written in third person perspective and Antonio's story in the 1970s is written in first person perspective from Antonio's point of view. I found this a bit confusing too until I figured out whose voice it was.

Except for Antonio, I didn't find the characters likeable. Everyone let Manuel get away with being just a jerk for so long. He had so much yet couldn't see it. Like Antonio, I kept wondering why his mother hadn't left.

I wasn't crazy about the ending. I thought it was a cop-out.

Blog review post: http://www.teenaintoronto.com/2015/02/book-barnacle-love-2008-anthony-de-sa.html

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