

Delve Deeper into *Dalya's Other Country*

A film by **Julia Meltzer**

This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Penny L. Talbert, MLIS and Laura E. Eaton, MLIS, of Ephrata Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Dalya's Other Country*.

Dalya's Other Country tells the nuanced story of members of a family displaced by the Syrian conflict who are remaking themselves after the parents separate. Effervescent teen Dalya goes to Catholic high school and her mother, Rudayna, enrolls in college as they both walk the line between their Muslim values and the new world in which they find themselves.

ADULT NONFICTION

Al-Khatahtbeh, Amani. *Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016. In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, a nine-year-old Muslim-American girl struggles to find her place in an increasingly Islamophobic America. Amani recalls her struggles with both typical teenage angst and prejudice against Muslims. After traveling from her New Jersey home to her father's native Jordan, she finds the website MuslimGirl.com, which aims to empower young Muslims with information and inspire activism.

Noorani, Ali. *There Goes the Neighborhood: How Communities Overcome Prejudice and Meet the Challenge of American Immigration*. Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2017. Ali Noorani, Executive Director of the National Immigration Forum, tackles one of our nation's most controversial topics: immigration. He discusses the challenges immigrants face to reconcile their cultures with American expectations. He argues that the immigration debate should be less concerned with policy and focus more on

the integration of cultures; the integration of different cultural values is central to the identity of the American people.

Eggers, Dave. *Zeitoun*. San Francisco: McSweeney's Books, 2009. Syrian-born Abdulrahman Zeitoun was a painting contractor in New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina devastated the city. He sent his wife and four children to safety, remaining behind to help with the rescue effort. When Zeitoun is accused of being a member of al-Qaeda, he is arrested and held in a wire cage. In recounting his story to Dave Eggers, he reflects on how his race and faith played a role in his arrest, and how Islamophobia has become normalized in post-9/11 America.

Malek, Alia. *A Country Called Amreeka*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009. This collection of vignettes is a glimpse into the lives of Arab Americans across the country from 1963 to the present. The reader experiences formative events in American history from the perspective of Arab Americans living in places as disparate as Birmingham and Baltimore. This book deepens our understanding of a group of Americans who are central to the public discourse, but whose own voices are rarely featured.

Zoe pf, Katherine. *Excellent Daughters: The Secret Lives of Young Women Who Are Transforming the Arab World*. New York: Penguin Press, 2016. Veteran journalist Katherine Zoe pf reports on the lives of women in the Middle East. Despite the stereotypes of Arab women as housebound wives, today, young women comprise the majority of university students in the Middle East and many are beginning to attend Qu'ranic schools, where they reinterpret Islam from a feminist perspective. Zoe pf's book examines the evolving role of women in societies across the Arab world.

Di Giovanni, Janine. *The Morning They Came For Us: Dispatches From Syria*. Norton, 2016. Award-winning veteran journalist Janine di Giovanni has written a devastating account of the Syrian conflict told through the eyes of ordinary people. This book takes the reader into the war zone to experience one of the most destructive wars in recent history, and the resilience of the Syrian people in the face of unspeakable atrocities.

Worth, Robert F. *A Rage for Order: The Middle East in Turmoil, from Tahrir Square to ISIS*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016. Praised by Fareed Zakaria as "the best book on the Arab world today," *A Rage for Order* combines meticulous analysis and engaging storytelling to explain the origins of the Arab Spring's descent into chaos. An essential read for anyone eager to understand the characters and political forces behind today's conflicts across the Middle East.

Borri, Francesca. *Syrian Dust: Reporting from the Heart of the War*. New York: Seven Stories, 2015. Syrian dust is a powerful first-person account of the Syrian war from the perspective of a young war journalist, Francesca Borri, who decides to stay in Aleppo after the outbreak of the civil war. This book makes clear the risks that journalists must take in order to convey the Syrian people's story to the outside world.

Malek, Alia. *The Home That Was Our Country*. New York, NY: Nation Books, 2017. Alia Malek travels from her home in Baltimore to Damascus, the birthplace of her ancestors. As Malek renovates her grandmother's apartment, she ventures into the Syrian resistance and becomes an informant on the workings of the secret police. This memoir describes the oppression of the Syrian people and the perils of resistance to the Assad regime.



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Khalifa, Khaled. *No Knives in the Kitchen of This City*.

Cairo: Hoopoe, 2016.

Set in Aleppo between the 1960s and the years just before the civil war, this novel shows the brutality of the Assad regime by telling the story of one family. Through rich, atmospheric prose, Khalifa's novel documents a humanitarian disaster unparalleled in modern times.

Hashimi, Nadia. *When the Moon is Low*.

Thorndike Press, 2016. Nadia Hashimi spins a terrific tale of a family that flees Kabul after the Taliban has taken the city. After the murder of the family's husband and father, they begin a dangerous trek across the Middle East and into Europe during a time of great political and religious upheaval. This novel shows the resourcefulness of refugee families trying to stay together as they flee to safety.

Kahf, Mohja. *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf: A Novel*.

New York: PublicAffairs, 2007. Before the 21st century's war on terror, Khadra Shamy is growing up in Indiana in the 1970s, learning how to be both a good Muslim and a minority in middle America. When her faith fails her, she travels to her parents' homeland, Syria, to search for her Muslim roots. In the 1980s, she returns home to Indiana with a renewed faith, and is forced to confront the ghosts of her past.

Rehman, Sabeeha. *Threading My Prayer Rug: One Woman's Journey from Pakastani Muslim to American Muslim*.

New York: Arcade Publishing, 2016. In a light-hearted book about Muslim-American life, Rehman recounts stories of her life, from her arranged marriage to her struggles raising American children while preserving her heritage and religious values. She discusses what it means to be an American Muslim woman and her efforts to further

interfaith understanding in her community.

NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Ali-Karamali, Sumbul. *Growing Up Muslim: Understanding the Beliefs and Practices of Islam*.

New York: Ember, 2013. Sumbul Ali-Karamali details her life growing up as a Muslim-American in Southern California. She spent her youth answering the questions of her non-Muslim peers, and has written this comprehensive guide to provide non-Muslim young people with a better understanding of a growing American culture.

Mason, Helen. *A Refugee's Journey from Syria (Leaving My Homeland)*.

New York, NY: Crabtree Publishing Company, 2017. This early reader book documents the journey of a young boy who must flee his homeland during the Syrian conflict. The book offers insights to young readers about the country of Syria and the plight of refugees around the world.

Ruurs, Margriet; Badr, Nizar Ali. *Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey*.

St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2017. Canadian children's book author Margriet Ruurs uses Syrian stone artist Nizar Ali Badr's work as inspiration for this tale about a young refugee girl and her family. Leaving their home with only what they can carry, Rama and her family traverse war-torn Syria by foot, making their way to Europe in search of peace and freedom. This highly acclaimed children's book pairs Ruurs' words with Badr's art.

St. John, Warren. *Outcasts United: The Story of a Refugee Soccer Team That Changed a Town*.

New York: Ember, 2013. This memoir tells the story of a soccer team in Clarkston, Georgia called the Fugees – a team made up entirely of refugees. Luma Mufleh, the Jordanian-born

coach, inspires her team members as they struggle with their memories of far-away homelands and their adaptation to life in a new country. Mufleh's tireless coaching draws admiration from her community both on and off the soccer field.

FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Bradman, Frances Lincoln.

***Give Me Shelter: Stories about Children Who Seek Asylum*.**

London: Frances Lincoln Children's, 2009. Tony Bradman's collection of short stories follow a variety of people who are forced to leave their homes behind and seek asylum. His stories show suffering, hope, and the generosity of those who welcome the refugees.

Ringgold, Faith. *We Came to America*.

New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. Faith Ringgold chronicles immigration to America, beginning with the earliest Native Americans through to the current migration wave. She explains the reasons for immigration, how immigrants arrived, and why the descendants of immigrants have shaped the diverse cultures and values of America for generations.

Sanna, Francesca. *The Journey*.

London; New York: Flying Eye Books, 2016. *The Journey* is a beautifully illustrated picture book collection of refugee journeys. Sanna explores the difficult decisions families are often forced to make in order to bring their families freedom.

