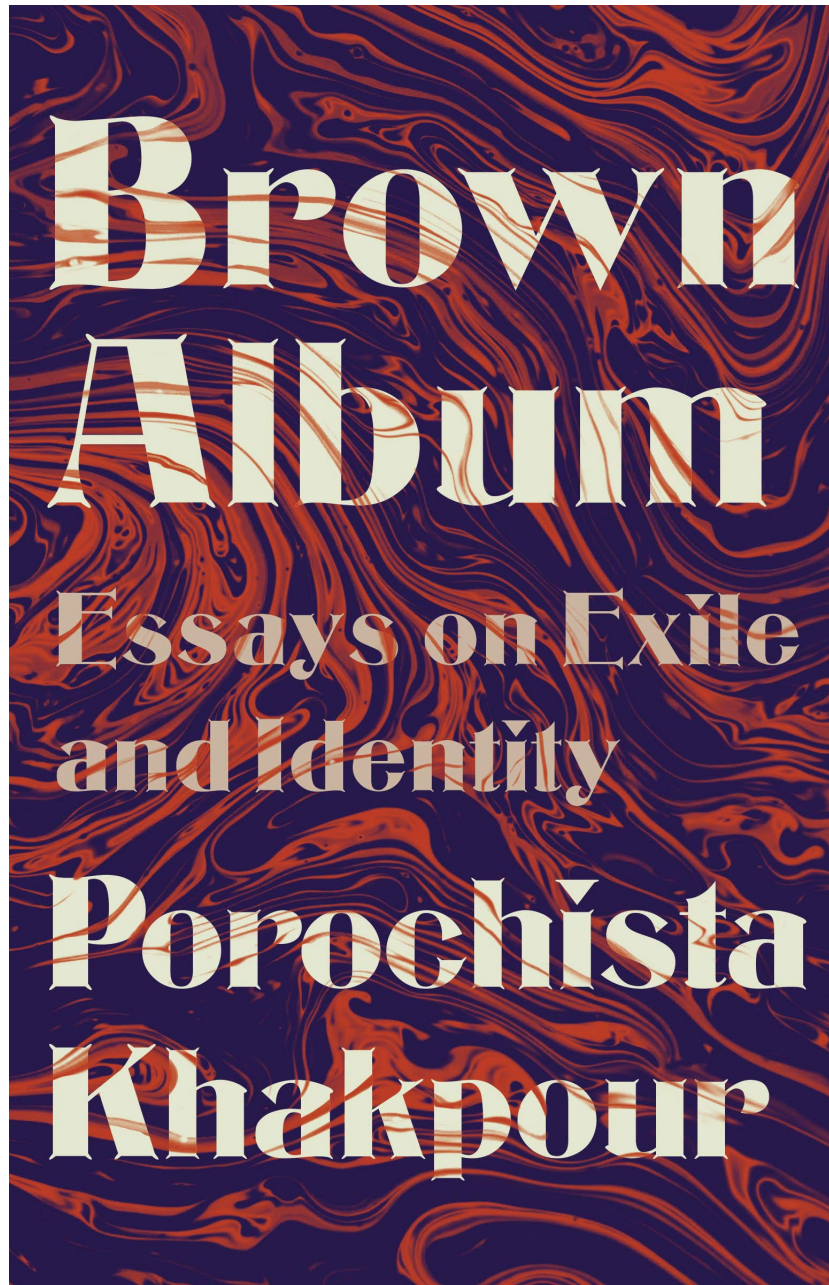


Brown Album: Essays on Exile and Identity Book PDF Download



**By:
Porochista Khakpour**

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What people Say:

Michael

collects together what Khakpour considers to be the best of her writings on Iranian-American identity, immigration, and race, with almost all of the pieces available online (in some form), notably excepting the final titular essay, which grapples with what it means to be Middle Eastern in the U.S. at a time of skyrocketing xenophobia. most of the essays mix personal and social history, ranging from reflections on the 40th anniversary of the Iranian Revolution to memories of NYC in the wake of 9/

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Fatemeh

A series of memories, some specific to Khakpour, many familiar to œbrown• American kids of all stripes. A great collection of essays that resonated deeply with me.

Kate

"You are 19 years in America, you become an American on November 2001 and you realize you could have had a child in that time. You have no kids, no husband, no home you own, no roots. No real reason to be here. Trump becomes president and your old country is on the list of the six countries of the "Muslim ban". You are suddenly a Muslim. No one doubts your brownness anymore. You realize that every day is lesson in America, the real America, the violent one."

â€¢

Thoughts~

I reccomend checking this one

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â€¢

Thoughts~

I reccomend checking this one out! I really enjoyed these relevant, moving, honest and eye opening essays about being an Iranian immigrant in America.

Poro-chista Khakpour and her family lived a prosperous life in Iran, but the Iranian Revolution found them escaping to America. In Los Angeles they found themselves living a much different life, one with cultural alienation. Through memories Poro-chista shares what everyday diaspora feels like, living through 9/11, and America's continued rocky relationship with Iran. She explores her search for identity, touching on mental health, creative writing, and more.

This was a deeply honest read. Another book white people should be required to read in my opinion. Her memoir SICK was interesting reading as well.

T

Not sure how to feel about this collection of essays. Iâ€™ve read Khakpourâ€™s novels (meh) and

memoir (in which an important issue â€” women being heard and taken seriously by medical professionals â€” is buried by the overwhelming evidence of Khakpour being an unreliable historian). Iâ€™ve been to one of her book readings, one that was mainly attended by her least favorite demographic (white people), where I waited around awkwardly to ask her to sign my book. She asked me if I was Iranian (yes...well, I

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I want to like Khakpourâ€™s work because she reminds me of my older sister. Theyâ€™re the same age, both born in Iran and raised in California. They both went through a period of rejecting their heritage, and becoming something else â€” if not blonde and all-American, then something else altogether. They both have fraught relationships with their Iranian immigrant parents. This is probably why Iâ€™m drawn to Khakpourâ€™s work, and why I wanted to read this book. Khakpour writes about her childhood, and trying to find herself and forge an identity as a writer, and as a New Yorker, in this essay collection.

Thereâ€™s a point in this collection where Khakpour transitions from desperately wanting to be anything BUT Iranian, to claiming identities that she doesnâ€™t necessarily have grounds to claim, or that she doesnâ€™t really explore. The person who was raised secular and experiments with drugs and alcohol suddenly identifies as Muslim. The person who co-opts aspects of hip hop culture and describes her father as â€œdarkâ€• and â€œresembling Barack Obamaâ€• (sorry...what?) attempts to claim Afro-Iranian ancestry without really explaining it, as if this validates the things she does or says. She tells us that sheâ€™s queer, but we only hear about her boyfriends, reminiscent of her memoir, where she writes about boyfriend after boyfriend before throwing out the â€œqueerâ€• identifier toward the end of the book. Sheâ€™s very critical of â€œwhite peopleâ€• and their various micro (and macro) aggressions targeted at her, but she doesnâ€™t really interrogate her own behavior, and she certainly doesnâ€™t consider her privilege as a white-passing individual.

There are some intriguing bits in this collection, like the essay about Tehrangeles, and the two ends of the spectrum that is the Iranian diaspora in California. She dances around the issues of race and racism in Iran and amongst Iranians in diaspora, but never really dives into them. There are also a lot of questionable bits, like the parts where she essentially brushes off all of her students because theyâ€™re apparently all white, instead of using the opportunity to teach them. I think Khakpour needs to do a bit more introspection, instead of attributing every less than stellar interaction she has to the raging racism of the white people around her.

Natalie (CuriousReader)

First published on my blog:

Brown Album collects Porochista Khakpour's essays exploring identity and expression, growing up, creative writing and loving stories, America and 9/11, and mental health, among myriad of things. She opens the book with positioning herself as an Iranian-American writer, having unwittingly become a kind of representative of Iranians in America or in the West generally, particularly as immigrants and within a setting where these two

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In one of the earliest essays she attempts to confront the split of Iran's identity as part of a dreamscape "Persia", with rich art and history; in contrast to the country's bleak present and conflicted relationship within and outside its national boundaries. "In the beginning there was the word Persian". Its connotations of all that is good about a country in a single word, as a strategic distancing from that four-letter name suggesting hostage crisis, terrorists, islamists, suspicion. As much as she questions some of the country's identity crisis, she shares some of her personal journey in figuring out who she was "as an immigrant of two identities especially as she had few memories of Iran, having moved as a three year old " she describes some of the mixed feelings she has of her own legacy, how she relates to her parents' background, political stance, attitude towards their new homeland, and where they belong. Her story of coming of age is increasingly complicated with some health issues that shapes many of her life decisions and paths taken. She finds a particular sense of purpose and connection through books and story-telling, she shares this passion through some of her journey into becoming a teacher of creative writing and a

published author.

I thought this was a wonderful book that really illustrates on the one hand the wider experience of being an immigrant or child of immigrants stuck in between two cultures and identities “ never quite belonging to either; as well as the more specific relationship she has with her birth country “ a relationship that she continues to make sense of through the writing of this book. A wonderful, thoughtful and in my opinion, highly eye-opening book about some of the experiences of someone both being able to “pass” and being judged as “other” in the country they have made their own. “I accepted it [America] and never, until much later, considered that it might not accept me”.