



Varieties of Disturbance: Stories

Lydia Davis

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Lydia Davis has been called "one of the quiet giants in the world of American fiction" (*Los Angeles Times*), "an American virtuoso of the short story form" (*Salon*), an innovator who attempts "to remake the model of the modern short story" (*The New York Times Book Review*). Her admirers include Grace Paley, Jonathan Franzen, and Zadie Smith; as *Time* magazine observed, her stories are "moving . . . and somehow inevitable, as if she has written what we were all on the verge of thinking."

In *Varieties of Disturbance*, her fourth collection, Davis extends her reach as never before in stories that take every form from sociological studies to concise poems. Her subjects include the five senses, fourth-graders, good taste, and tropical storms. She offers a reinterpretation of insomnia and re-creates the ordeals of Kafka in the kitchen. She questions the lengths to which one should go to save the life of a caterpillar, proposes a clear account of the sexual act, rides the bus, probes the limits of marital fidelity, and unlocks the secret to a long and happy life.

No two of these fictions are alike. And yet in each, Davis rearranges our view of the world by looking beyond our preconceptions to a bizarre truth, a source of delight and surprise.

Varieties of Disturbance is a 2007 National Book Award Finalist for Fiction.

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